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**Practices of Emancipation:**

**An Analysis of Security, Dialogue and Change  
in Post-War Vukovar**

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Philosophy in Politics and International Studies**

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## **Declaration**

**I hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own, that the thesis contains no published material that did not arise from work on the thesis or material that has been used in another thesis, and that the thesis has not been submitted for examination for a degree at another university.**

## **Abstract**

The thesis analyses the Croatian city of Vukovar as a way of animating theoretical debates about the relationship between security, emancipation and practice. It claims that emancipation must be understood through experiences of security and insecurity as they are lived.

Located in security studies, it begins with a critical reading of the Welsh School. Ken Booth's original move to associate security with emancipation opened up new possibilities for reimagining the field and for practicing security, but subsequent developments orientated the security as emancipation move towards closure. A genuinely open way of exploring this move is the context of Andrew Linklater's adaptation of Habermasian discourse ethics. In this way an engagement between Booth and Linklater is opened which runs throughout the thesis.

The second part introduces Vukovar. It details the violence of late-1991 seen in the city, and outlines how the emergence of Croatian democracy represents a form of settlement. Yet patterns of memorialisation and reconstruction in Vukovar entrench a pro-Croat narrative of settlement at the expense of non-Croats who are unjustly excluded. Furthermore, interviews with leaders of local civil society, religious and political groups suggest that difference and contestation, rather than settlement, characterise the post-war period in Vukovar.

The third part presents an analysis of the emancipatory practices which take place within the local context of contestation. Interviews with NGOs in Vukovar support Booth's emphasis on civil society groups as agents of emancipation. Subsequent interviews challenge his view in important ways as the human limits of emancipatory practices are revealed. However, even when such limitations are taken into account, certain civil society practices show how Booth and Linklater's respective understandings of emancipatory practice are played out in what are termed micro-dialogic communities. These alternative dialogues open new spaces and allow dominant understandings of the war to be challenged.



## **Research Training**

As the beneficiary of an ESRC 1+3 studentship, the author received advanced training in research methods and methodology, and completed dedicated modules on research design, qualitative research, interview techniques and research ethics as part of an MA in Research Methods in Politics and International Relations at the University of Sheffield. Further seminars on research training were also attended as part of the PhD programme in the Department of Politics and International Studies, University of Warwick.

And all our dainty terms for fratricide;  
Terms which we trundle smoothly o'er our tongues  
Like mere abstractions, empty sounds to which  
We join no feeling and attach no form!

From *Fears in Solitude*, S.T. Coleridge, 1798

## **Introduction**

The violence done by and to others has long been of interest to scholars. Many have worked, often with sympathy and compassion, to understand, alleviate and prevent violent acts, and the creativity upon which academic work thrives has given rise to numerous approaches, methods and theories informed by these sentiments. A central problem, however, which may never be fully rectified, is the distance between scholars and the subjects of scholarship, between the comfort of study and the pain of that being studied.

Although the academic fulfils an essential role in a free society, exercising the right to learn, think and speak for oneself, there is a real danger of even the best intentions resulting in those ‘empty sounds to which we join no feeling and attach no form’, as Coleridge warns in the quotation at the beginning of this thesis (Coleridge, 2001 [1798], p. 54). The sounds that are made through scholarship, that are given life through the page and which resonate in lecture halls, seminar rooms and conferences cannot be of those for whom the bell tolled, but they can at least be given feeling and form by including in scholarship the voices of those who were there to witness. There is a quality to such accounts of politics, particularly when violence is involved, which the scholar alone will usually not be able to penetrate.

The discussions to follow concern a specific academic discourse which developed during the 1990s and into the new century, which in this thesis is termed the Welsh School of Security Studies. In some of the material to be discussed in chapter 1 the same discourse is described as Critical Security Studies (CSS). To avoid the debate around the meaning of ‘critical’ and CSS that label is not employed here. Furthermore, the expression Welsh School helps to define a particular branch



of critical approaches to security studies, at a time when many scholars would see themselves as in some way engaged in developing such approaches. That branch is largely concerned with the relationship between the concepts of security and emancipation, but it also claims to be greatly concerned with the meaning, scope and implementation of political practice.

The thesis claims that the Welsh School of security studies has so far insufficiently bridged the gap between scholarship and subject. Indeed, what is required is a fundamental shift away from forms of closure which are apparent within the discourse in its current state, and towards understandings of emancipation through experiences of security and insecurity as they are lived. Such a step seeks to reclaim Ken Booth's groundbreaking move to associate security as emancipation within contemporary debates about security (Booth, 1991a).

Yet it also moves beyond any notion that the security as emancipation move can be framed, managed even, within any body of academic literature, because attempts to understand security and emancipation as lived experiences reveal a characteristic of political violence that cannot be easily translated into a programme of study. Indeed, that characteristic may even refuse understanding, given the limits of human empathy. Scholars who have studied suffering through fiction, for example, have noted that what literature says about suffering 'concerns the need for respect in the face of an experience that always holds back part of its truth, inaccessible and alien' (Morris, 1996, p. 42).

In contrast to tendencies within the Welsh School towards formulating the security as emancipation move in terms of a scholarly programme, the thesis argues that the theories developed by the Welsh School should be used as a guide to

identifying specific locations where emancipatory practices might be evident and to then attempt to understand such practices in their own context, instead of using them solely to support theory.

The movement towards the specific locality as a means to understanding politics is therefore key for the progression of this thesis, but should not be understood in terms of a movement away from the global or the international as vital ontological categories and realities, nor from the idea of globalisation. The thesis sees no dichotomous relationship between the local and the international, but rather seeks to understand the ways in which these two sites are mutually constitutive in terms of political reality.

As such, the idea of the international in the local, of international and global political and social developments manifesting themselves in specific and localised places, is central to this thesis. It is in the locality that wider developments are played out by individuals, and it is at the level of the individual that new perspectives on those developments can be grasped. The importance of attempting to understand those perspectives in the context of debates about security and emancipation will become apparent as the thesis develops. Another way of expressing this relationship is in terms of the macro and the micro. Macro political developments concerning dialogue also play out in micro form. One important contribution the thesis seeks to make is to claim that important insights regarding emancipation and security as lived experiences can be seen when understood through the perspective of those engaged in what are described as micro-dialogic communities.

Such points bring this introduction to the empirical focus of the thesis, which is the Croatian city of Vukovar. In the autumn of 1991, Vukovar was subject to a long bombardment led by the Yugoslavian National Army assisted by paramilitary troops. Targeting was indiscriminate, and subsequently hundreds of civilians were killed and thousands more driven from their homes. Vukovar was one of the first places in the region to experience the violent bouts of ethnic cleansing that would characterise the Balkans wars of the 1990s.

So much has already been written about those wars, and rightly so, but this thesis contributes to that literature only indirectly. The central focus is on understanding Vukovar as a specific site of security and insecurity through which it is possible to understand emancipatory practices as they play out. The war that began in 1991 caused direct forms of insecurity, but more subtle and longer lasting forms of insecurity persist. Different agents employing different strategies and understandings of security have been active in Vukovar. Some of those agents would see Vukovar as having undergone a successful post-war transition towards settlement. The thesis challenges such a view and suggests that the post-war settlement is only partial, a view which emerges primarily through the experience of the everyday.

The everyday, it is argued, reveals the extent to which forms of insecurity prevail, and the extent to which the state is complicit in the insecurity of its citizens. In reaction to these forms of insecurity, practices which can be described as peacebuilding emerge. This thesis does not seek to make a direct contribution to the literature surrounding peacebuilding, conflict resolution or peace studies, which is very large indeed. It may, however, speak to some of the themes covered within it,



particularly the relationship between dialogic relations and the idea of peace which has been noted by scholars (Richmond, 2006, p. 389).

Such practices allow dominant understandings of the war to be challenged and facilitate dialogue between those who would otherwise be unlikely to communicate in such an open way. The emotional engagement required in such exchanges and the extent to which participants in these practices, including micro-dialogic communities, are willing to be revealed to members of the 'other' community as vulnerable, should not be underestimated.

Using Vukovar in this way opens up a number of opportunities for studying the security as emancipation move as it is experienced by individual subjects. The fact that comparatively few academic studies have been written about Vukovar in English further lends the city to empirical analysis.

It is in Vukovar that, for the author of this thesis, ideas about war and peace, security and insecurity, even politics itself, have been made more real. That politics can do great harm to the innocent is all too evident in such a place. The thesis attempts to convey something of the human impact that war has by using a number of firsthand testimonies and opinions. This is one way of developing the security as emancipation move through lived experiences.

The thesis opens with a critique of the Welsh School built around the proposition that Ken Booth's original move to associate security with emancipation opened up new possibilities for reimagining the field and for practicing security, but the subsequent development of a School led to the emergence of a number of closures. Chapter 2 moves the thesis forward by arguing that a genuinely open way of exploring the security as emancipation move would be in the context of Andrew

Linklater's adaptation of Habermasian discourse ethics. This opens up an engagement between Booth and Linklater, two of the most serious recent thinkers within the discipline of International Relations to have reflected upon the meaning of emancipation in relation to contemporary world politics, which runs throughout the thesis. This first part of the thesis is concerned with developing the theoretical basis for subsequent chapters.

The second part opens with chapter 3 and is concerned with introducing the empirical setting of Vukovar. It details the violence of late-1991 seen in the city, and outlines how the eventual acceptance by post-Westphalian Europe of Croatian democracy represents a form of settlement. In an attempt to understand what happened in Vukovar in late 1991 and to explore how contemporaries understood their predicament at the time the chapter uses a number of primary sources written mainly by civilians. In this way the experience of insecurity is introduced through their words. It is this period of insecurity which shaped the specific social and political context of the city during the post-war period.

What is important for discussions of security and emancipation are the ways in which different agents appeared to accept the notion of a post-war settlement in Vukovar and Croatia as a whole. Forms of memorialisation and reconstruction in Vukovar, however, attempt to entrench a pro-Croat narrative of settlement at the expense of non-Croats who are unjustly excluded. The work of Jenny Edkins is utilised at this juncture, discussed in chapter 4. This suggests that notions of settlement, and therefore emancipation, are premature in Vukovar. Chapter 5 develops the argument that the settlement is partial by drawing upon interviews conducted in Vukovar among local residents. Interviews with leaders of local civil society, religious and political groups suggest that difference and contestation, rather

than settlement, characterise the post-war period in Vukovar. In this way the dynamic interplay between the universal and the particular in Linklater's work comes alive through empirical analysis which also speaks to Booth's call for a focus on 'real people in real places'.

The third part further explores this interplay through an analysis of the emancipatory practices which take place within the local context of difference and contestation. Interviews with NGOs in Vukovar support Booth's emphasis on civil society groups as agents of emancipation. Chapter 6 provides evidence to support this view, and as such offers support to those who would look to global civil society as agents of emancipatory change. Chapter 7, however, challenges this view in important ways as the human limits of civil society engagement in emancipatory practices are also revealed. It is in this chapter that the security as emancipation move as seen through lived experiences reveals the challenge of practice and implementation. Contradictions with theoretical literature which sees civil society in a positive light emerge.

Yet even taking these limitations into account, the thesis argues that civil society organisations in Vukovar perform a vital role within the locality. Certain civil society practices show how Booth and Linklater's respective understandings of emancipatory practice are played out in micro-dialogic communities. Such practices allow individuals to explore their competing truth claims about the war in Croatia through open dialogue. These alternative dialogues open new spaces and allow dominant understandings of the war to be challenged. Reflections about the potential role of such communities are made in conclusion.



In these ways the thesis seeks to make a contribution to security studies. By doing so, the thesis asserts that it is essential for scholars to engage further with such practitioners in developing an emancipatory approach to security that would embrace the contingency of practice rather than the disciplinary powers of the Academy. The central argument is that understandings of security and emancipation must be seen through lived experiences.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Possibility and Closure: A Critical Analysis of the Welsh School of Security Studies**

#### *Introduction*

The aim of this chapter is to situate the thesis within the subdiscipline of security studies and in relation to the Welsh School. Although this thesis is sympathetic to its aims, the chapter presents a critical analysis of the Welsh School and argues that Ken Booth's original move to associate security with emancipation opened up a number of possibilities for reimagining and practising security but subsequent intellectual developments, which led to the formation of the Welsh School, also served to orientate the security as emancipation move towards closure. The chapter begins by locating the Welsh School in its subdisciplinary context, and by outlining the contemporary intellectual geography of the subdiscipline of security studies.

It then discusses the Welsh School and outlines the move towards closure as critique, which is made in three stages. The first stage argues that the Welsh School shifted the emphasis of the security as emancipation move from the politics of process to the politics of crisis. The second asserts that the Welsh School emphasises the differences with other approaches to security over their compatibility. The third argues that there is an absence of voice 'from below' in the Welsh School. The need to move beyond the Welsh School towards an understanding of emancipation as lived experience is expressed in the final stages of the chapter, and is taken up in more detail in the following chapter.



### *The Subdiscipline of Security Studies*

This thesis seeks to make a contribution to the study of security, and as such it is necessary to locate the thesis in the broader security studies literature which forms the wider context of this study. Security studies can be seen as a subdiscipline of International Relations (IR) and as a subfield of a number of other disciplines such as Sociology and Geography. As Stuart Croft argues, within the subdiscipline there is a divide between a realist/liberal/constructivist triangle on the one hand and a number of critical approaches on the other. Understood as a subfield, security studies can be seen as a multidisciplinary approach to various forms of violence which is concerned with, among other things, the relationship between security, culture, images and identity (Croft, 2008). Three constructed disciplinary spaces are being passed through in order to locate the thesis. First, the thesis is located within security studies understood as a subdiscipline of IR. Second, within that subdiscipline it is located within the family of critical approaches. Third, within that family it identifies with the Welsh School of security studies.

The thesis is sympathetic towards the Welsh School, but simultaneously it seeks to move beyond the Welsh School. It is thus an outwardly facing thesis, situating itself in close relation to a school of thought whilst being concerned with looking beyond the school to the immediate area of other critical approaches, and to the new pastures opening up beyond the subdiscipline within the subfield. The argument is that scholars must move beyond the Welsh School in order to understand security as emancipation through lived experiences. This is to take issue with some tendencies apparent in the scholarship of Ken Booth, around whose work the school has developed. This will be discussed in depth below. Whilst the thesis recognises that it is desirable to have a subfield which engages with disciplines

outside IR like Sociology, Anthropology and Psychology, what is important for the thesis is to first sketch the parameters of the subdiscipline in order to locate the Welsh School.

Security studies is one subdiscipline among others within IR, which also includes the subdisciplines of International Political Economy, Development Studies, Area Studies and IR theory. The distinctions between them are never set; however, it is clear from the range of IR publications, from the internal arrangements of departments and taught courses, and from the organisation of scholarly organisations such as the British International Studies Association and the International Studies Association that these subdisciplines form a social 'reality'.

Debates within the discipline of IR and within the subdiscipline of security studies over the last two and a half decades have transformed the subdiscipline from a rather stale pursuit in which the study of military strategy and the national interest ruled to a vibrant, open and exciting place in which to engage in academic inquiry. It is according to one observer, 'a wonderful time to be a scholar of the (sub)discipline – and by any scholar I mean students and tutors – because there is so much new and innovative thinking taking place that it is impossible for it not to open your mind' (Collins, 2007, p. 9).

The debates that led to the creation of the innovative subdiscipline which is now apparent have been ongoing since at least the 1980s, when the concept of security began to be exposed to a level of scrutiny which had not been forthcoming within the neorealist/neoliberal mainstream of the time. Barry Buzan was instrumental here in suggesting that the focus of security studies should be broadened to include societal, environmental, economic and political threats, as well

as traditional military ones (Buzan, 1983). Booth would later be key in arguing that the referent point of security – the matter of what is to be secured – should be the individual human being (Booth, 1991a). Martin Shaw made the case for including the notion of community in such debates, as well as the state and individual (Shaw, 1993.) These arguments led to the broadening and deepening of the subdiscipline (Krause and Williams, 1996). Such contributions were important in shifting the subdiscipline away from the statist, neorealist driven mainstream which had been greatly influenced by Kenneth Waltz (Waltz, 1979).

Wider disciplinary debates fuelled innovation within the security studies subdiscipline into the 1990s. Alex Wendt's constructivism was eventually able to join the American mainstream along with neorealists and neoliberals (Wendt, 1992; Wendt, 1995). Feminist approaches to IR proliferated and challenged patriarchal assumptions (Tickner, 1988; Enloe, 1990; Tickner, 1992; Enloe, 1993; Sylvester, 1994). Poststructuralist thought arrived late to the discipline but became more influential within it (Der Derian and Shapiro, 1989; Ashley and Walker, 1990; Walker, 1993). Postpositivism, a view sceptical towards the notion that truth can be objectively discovered, was increasingly seen as the metatheoretical basis for many within IR, albeit outside the American mainstream and not without controversy (Smith, 1995). What these disciplinary debates illustrated was the challenge of understanding the post-Cold War era as well as the influence of wider intellectual and cultural movements.

It was in this disciplinary context that new debates within the subdiscipline took place. For some, the lack of theoretical cohesiveness that innovation within security studies meant was to be deplored, as it has been argued that broadening understandings of security produces incoherence by reducing the utility of security



as an analytical concept (Haftendorn, 1991; Baldwin, 1997; Morgan, 2000). Traditionalists tried to defend their position by asserting the timeless wisdom of neorealism (Gray, 1999; Mearsheimer, 2001). Indeed realism has seen a resurgence after 9/11 and remains the dominant theory of international security, positioned at the centre of theoretical disputes and the first reference point for competing theories (Williams, 2005).

Others embraced the new avenues available to scholars in security studies which began the process of further dividing the subdiscipline into different, often geographically signified schools of thought. In the mid-to-late 1990s, when it was clear that such a range of approaches had developed, they were characterised as critical security studies (Krause and Williams, 1997). This was an attempt to embrace the variety of ways in which the traditional focus on states and national security was being challenged. A more recent attempt to synthesise various critical approaches is made by Karin Fierke, who provides a broad approach to critical security studies which highlights the fact that most critical approaches (the possible exception being some uses of human security) adopt a constructivist view of security (Fierke, 2007).

Although it is important to highlight the ways in which these approaches relate to one another to ensure their commonalities are seen, it is also important to recognise the various strands of critical thought within security studies to appreciate the depth and difference within the subdiscipline. Difference makes the subdiscipline stronger because the meeting of contrasting viewpoints acts as a spur to intellectual dynamism and creativity. Five approaches stand out: The Copenhagen School; poststructuralism, which is sometimes referred to as the Paris School within the subdiscipline; human security; feminism; and the Welsh School. Before an

analysis of the Welsh School can begin, it is important to discuss these other approaches because the Welsh School developed at the same time and came to be defined against them. Their development is part of the intellectual history of the Welsh School also.

The Copenhagen School emerged and coalesced around the 1998 publication of *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Buzan et al, 1998) which tied together a decade of new thought on security (see Huysmans, 1998).<sup>1</sup> Building upon the constructivist insight that both security interests and the identity of actors are socially produced, the Copenhagen School used the term 'securitisation' to describe the process of taking politics 'beyond the established rules of the game' and framing an issue 'either as a special kind of politics or as above politics' (Buzan et al, 1998, p. 23). An issue becomes a security issue when it is accepted by an audience as an existential threat as part of a 'securitising move' which can be enabled by favourable conditions such as the position of the speaker (Buzan et al, 1998, p. 25). Ultimately the reverse of securitisation, *desecuritisation*, is preferable because it keeps key issues within public discourse rather than restricting their consideration to elites (Buzan et al, 1998, p. 29).

A large number of empirical studies have been generated from these insights as well as much critical discussion (for example Hansen, 2000; Buzan and Wæver, 2003; Abrahamsen, 2005; Balzacq, 2005; Jutila, 2006; Emmers, 2007; Floyd, 2010). In addition to these contributions a number of constructivist studies have emerged which do not necessarily submit to the Copenhagen School agenda (Katzenstein, 1996; Weldes, 1996; Desch, 1998; Barnett, 1999; Weldes, 1999; Croft, 2006).

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<sup>1</sup> Buzan and Wæver were both associated with the Copenhagen Peace Research School.

Scholars within the subdiscipline influenced by poststructuralism developed an important body of work at the same time as the Copenhagen School; indeed, the two approaches often overlapped (an early example is Klein, 1990). David Campbell's *Writing Security* was a landmark in using Foucauldian theory in relation to US foreign policy, being concerned with subjectivity rather than with relations between predetermined subjects, a theme later continued by Rob Walker (Campbell, 1992; Walker, 1997). Others turned to Nietzsche and called for scholars to embrace the new disorder 'through a commensurate deterritorialisation of theory' (Der Derian, 1995, p. 41). Lene Hansen saw the links between poststructuralism and the Copenhagen School, prompting more openings for discussions of how security is discursively constructed (Hansen, 1997). David Mutimer exemplified these similarities in a discussion of the use of metaphor in security discourse (Mutimer, 1997). A study of Bosnia showed the inherent violence within notions of national community (Campbell, 1998).

Such questioning of the ontological integrity of security gave rise to understandings of security as a *system* rather than a commodity (Burke, 2002). These developments made it difficult for poststructuralists to engage in detailed policy discussions (Sheenan, 2005, p. 149) Lene Hansen provides a notable exception (Hansen, 2005). Furthermore, poststructuralists have mounted important critiques of contemporary security issues such as the 'War on Terror', and the wider context of late modern warfare of which it is part (Jabri, 2006).

Some poststructuralist writings, particularly those centred upon the work of Didier Bigo (Bigo, 2002; Bigo and Guild, 2005) have been grouped into what has been referred to as the 'Paris School' of security studies (Wæver, 2004.) Jef Huysmans, for example, draws upon Bigo among others to develop a study of the



relationship between security and migration (Huysmans, 2006). It is noticeable however that many of the authors mentioned above appear to be reluctant to embrace being 'schooled' in this way, a sign perhaps of the poststructuralist scepticism towards attempts to capture and order academic discourse.

A further contribution to critical approaches has been the discourse on human security. UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali brought the notion of human security to prominence in an early speech (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). The 1993 United Nations Development Report called for a new age of global cooperation built around the concept of human security soon after. The focus of security, it argued, must change from an emphasis on arms to human development, from the security of the state to a concern with food, employment and the environment (UNDR, 1993, p. 2). The Commission on Global Governance, which had drawn some of its members from the Palme Commission as well as the World Commission on Environment and Development and the South Commission, also professed a concern with human dignity, but asserted the security of people and planet as well the state as the central concern.

Reflecting (unreferenced) continuity with Buzan's earlier call for the broadening of the concept, the Commission on Global Governance urged for consideration not only of military threats to human life but also economic, social, environmental and political threats, as well as adopting the Palme Commission's call for nuclear disarmament based on the premise that such weapons were not legitimate national defences (Commission on Global Governance, 1995). The call for a focus on human security has had an important impact on the subdiscipline and offers policy makers an alternative and easily adoptable discourse to that of national security (see Thomas, 2001; Kaldor, 2007). Scholars have noted however that such

attempts to place the human at the heart of security debates is hardly new (Rothschild, 1995).

Wider debates about feminism also impacted the subdiscipline. In many ways the feminist critique of traditional approaches to security is more profound and wide ranging than those offered by the Copenhagen and Paris Schools or the human security paradigm because they seek to problematise the international political system as a whole which is seen as complicit with the insecurity of women (Tickner, 1995). Rethinking security from a feminist perspective would involve thinking about militarism, patriarchy, environmental degradation, poverty, debt, population growth and the distribution of resources (Steans, 2006). The reason behind this broad rethinking is that traditional conceptions of security rely upon but simultaneously silence the vital concept of masculinity, and hence feminist approaches have attempted to highlight the centrality of *gender* to conceptions of security (Hansen and Olsson, 2004).

Although there are different strands within feminist approaches, they argue that international politics in practice and in academia is gendered. Key concepts such as power, the state, the warrior and sovereignty are seen as masculinised and thus contribute to a conceptualisation of women as passive receivers of protection rather than agents of security, when in fact evidence suggests that women are agents of security in a variety of ways, for example in human rights campaigns or in conflict resolution. The empirical chapters to follow certainly support that view. Feminist approaches are also more inclined to take the individual human as the subject of security than approaches informed by the Copenhagen or Paris Schools (Sheehan, 2005). What has now become clearer is that trying to understand security without



understanding the importance of gender leads to an unsatisfactory understanding of both (Kennedy-Pipe, 2007).

What these comments seek to show is the plurality of approaches available to contemporary scholars within the subdiscipline of security. The above discussion has focused on one side of the debate within the subdiscipline, those approaches to security studies which are broadly critical of traditional approaches. One problem with the use of the term 'critical' is that it has different definitions, which can lead to an over-emphasis on semantics as the expense of engaging with more pressing issues.

However, it is important to see the family of critical approaches to security as connected, as they all share a common dissatisfaction with traditional approaches which have tended to reify the state and state sovereignty as core concepts and military strategy as the central focus of study (Booth, 1991a). All of the approaches discussed above have helped to make the subdiscipline such an exciting place to be, and security is now a genuinely contested concept (Smith, 2005). It is important to note this because it is within the subdisciplinary openness now available to contemporary students of security studies that this thesis is located.

The chapter began by saying that the thesis is located within security studies understood as a subdiscipline of IR and within that subdiscipline it is located within the family of critical approaches. The above discussion has provided a broad outline of these first two layers of academic work within which the thesis broadly situates. It has sought to capture something of the variety within the subdiscipline and within critical approaches, in order to make the point that a number of approaches exist and that this is desirable for scholarship. The discussion has also served the purpose of

contextualising the theoretical literature from which the thesis develops. The way in which the Welsh School developed is thus deeply embedded in this wider context, and the nature of that development cannot be fully understood without first noting the above discussion. The chapter will now turn to this third layer of scholarship, the Welsh School of security studies, to which the thesis closely relates.

### *The Welsh School of Security Studies*

It is first necessary to define the Welsh School. There are at least two approaches to this. The first would be to describe the Welsh School as an approach to security studies driven by the view that ‘emancipation is security’ (Booth, 1991a). This might be understood as the ‘textbook’ approach. The second approach would be to describe it as a socially constructed trend within academia, created primarily in British universities and existing only in journals, books and the minds of scholars and students. The difference is that the first approach accepts and reifies the idea of the Welsh School, whilst the second attempts to emphasise that fact that the Welsh School has been invented for a purpose. The benefit of such an approach is that it opens up a degree of critical distance between this thesis and the School itself.

This second approach to understanding the Welsh School suggests that such a school only exists because scholars say it does, which correlates with the fact that there is no Welsh School building and scholars sympathetic with or even ‘within’ the Welsh School do not carry membership cards or have special privileges of any kind. This is important because it helps students of security studies remember the fluidity of modern scholarship on security - there is no Welsh School building because it could never be built. Furthermore, it is crucial to bear this in mind if scholars are to understand and ultimately be critical of the first definition of the Welsh School

presented above. The use of the term Welsh School is to some extent a trick of the mind, and is used to denote authority as much as coherence.

What is clear however is that the 'textbook' understanding of the Welsh School is now part of the 'reality' of security studies (McDonald, 2008). The 'textbook' approach to exploring the Welsh School would be to outline the key epistemological and ontological positions of the school and its core concepts which help to distinguish it from other schools. Steve Smith and Pinar Bilgin exemplify this approach very well (Smith, 2005; Bilgin, 2008). The problem with these approaches which seek to define the Welsh School is that they present only an endpoint, which is really a projection of what they want the Welsh School to be: coherent, solidified and, crucially, able to defend itself against critics. Indeed, the very term 'Welsh School', a key signifier of coherence and stability for exponents of the 'textbook' view, limits understandings of the concepts it advocates. This point will become more obvious as the thesis progresses, particularly with regards to the chapters dealing with Vukovar directly.

The analysis to be undertaken in this way suggests that the Welsh School shows tendencies to *open up and close down simultaneously*. At a subdisciplinary level, the opening up of the field to new understandings of security occurred simultaneously with the fragmentation of the subdiscipline into various approaches, some geographically defined, as discussed in the first section of this chapter. At an individual level, the opening up of understandings of security to the idea of emancipation, and the potential of such a move, has been closed off to an extent by Booth himself and others who have built upon his position and aided the development of the Welsh School. This closure has been caused by Booth's



insistence on defining a single approach against all others, in other words, to win the new battle for the soul of security studies.

It is this tension between opening up and closing down which can be seen to define the Welsh School, and which provides the basis of the argument that scholars sympathetic to the security as emancipation move should think beyond the Welsh School. The argument in this section, then, is that the move to define security as emancipation opened up new opportunities for the theory and practice of security, but the development of the Welsh School closed off the more radical possibilities in favour of a thin 'theory to be applied to case study' approach.

As Booth has been the driving force of the Welsh School it is important to analyse his work in depth, as the next section does, however a number of scholars have played important roles in this development such as Richard Wyn Jones, Paul Williams, Eli Stamnes, Graeme Cheeseman and others. These scholars can also be seen to 'speak for' the Welsh School and their work is discussed in a subsequent section in order to understand how the Welsh School has evolved outside Booth's own work. The thesis as a whole will suggest how the radical edge of the emancipation as security move can be regained from the closures that have emerged as the Welsh School grew. What is needed is a move towards understanding emancipation as lived experience.

The assessment below is advanced in three stages, each focusing on a separate critique. The first describes a movement away from an emphasis on the politics of process to the politics of crisis. The second discusses a movement away from focusing on the benefits of scholarly compatibility towards greater emphasis on the differences between approaches. The third and longest section reflects upon the

relationship between theory and practice and the absence of voice in much Welsh School empirical work. The discussion as a whole is an attempt to outline how the Welsh School orientates the security as emancipation move towards closure, which frames further discussions regarding the need to move beyond the Welsh School, taken up towards the end of the chapter and outlined at length in chapter 2.

### *Critique 1: From Process to Crisis*

In an important collection of essays published in 2005, Ken Booth outlined his desire to move beyond the version of critical security studies he had inspired ‘as *a body of critical knowledge* and outline a specific *critical theory of security*’ (Booth, 2005, p. 259). He justified this move as follows:

‘The challenges faced by humans at all levels demand a more effective theory of security: our times are too complex and the world too varied for the reductionisms, parsimony, simplicities, regressive implications, silences, and normative assumptions of political realism in its various manifestations’ (Booth, 2005, p. 259).

Booth is saying here that a theory needs to be developed to rival neorealism, and two years later his own *Theory of World Security* was published (Booth, 2007). This can be read as an attempt at shaping the Welsh School into a more cohesive approach to security studies; however, it is important to note that Booth explicitly states that he is not trying to create a new orthodoxy because he argues that such a development would not be in the spirit of critical theorising. He also states his hope that ‘students will critique the framework (of a critical theory of security) and reassemble the parts in their own ways’ (Booth, 2005, p. 259). This thesis can certainly be seen in the spirit of those remarks.

Such sentiments in Booth’s later work, which are conducive towards openness, show consistency with his earlier scholarship. In his seminal article,

*Security and Emancipation*, Booth appeals to 'the tradition of critical theory' because 'its most important contribution in the present state of the subject lies in recapturing the idea that politics is open-ended and based in ethics' (Booth, 1991a, p. 321). This would require a new language for politics, he argues, as the words traditionally used in international political analysis are no longer fit for purpose, with concepts such as sovereignty and the state being incapable of accurately helping scholars to understand a changing world. 'New times', which is what Booth originally called the immediate post-Cold War period, required a new language of politics for which the notion of emancipation could be a starting point, the danger being that if scholars 'insist upon old images, the future will naturally tend to replicate the past' (Booth, 1991a, p. 315. See also Booth, 1995). Such is Booth's appeal to openness in thought and in language.

Yet in *Theory of World Security*, although aspects of the theorising are given over to outlining an apparently open approach to politics through the construction of 'emancipatory communities', much of the work is an attempt to focus thought on the urgency of the present rather than on the open-endedness of politics. This point will be elaborated upon below.

Booth's understanding of emancipatory politics is informed by his definition of emancipation, which 'as a discourse of politics...seeks the securing of people from those oppressions that stop them carrying out what they would freely choose to do, compatible with the freedom of others' (Booth, 2007, p. 112). This understanding of emancipation provides a threefold framework for politics which Booth describes in the following way:

*'As a philosophical anchorage*, emancipation serves as a basis for saying whether something is 'true'; in other words, whether particular claims to



knowledge should be taken seriously. An anchorage is not a neutral (objective) foundation, but instead represents the soundest understanding then available on which to frame future political projects. *As a theory of progress*, emancipation offers an account of the actual world of world politics in which projects are possible. Progress is understood, reflexively, as a dynamic and reversible process; it is not therefore an inevitable outcome of politics, nor is it identifiable with one timeless blueprint of social organisation. Finally, *as a practice of resistance* emancipation is a framework for attempting to actualise both nearer-term and longer-term emancipatory goals through strategic and tactical political action based on immanent critique' (Booth, 2007, p. 112).

Booth's elaboration of the concept of emancipation outlines an epistemological and ontological basis for thinking about world politics, a theory through which politics can be understood, and a guide to practice. The extract above provides a starting point for thinking critically about world politics, but Booth also outlines a desirable endpoint encompassed in the idea of the 'emancipatory community' which is arguably Booth's central theoretical contribution in *Theory of World Security*. This form of political organisation is described by Booth as follows:

'An emancipatory community recognises that people have multiple identities, that a person's identity cannot be satisfactorily defined by any single attribution (religion, class, race, etc.), and that people must be allowed to live simultaneously in a variety of communities expressing their multifaceted lives. An emancipatory community is therefore a free association of individuals, recognising their solidarity in relation to common conceptions of what it is to live an ethical life, binding people together with a sense of belonging and a distinctive network of ideas and support' (Booth, 2007, p. 138-9).

What is required for world security, Booth argues, is 'a world community bound together by networks of emancipatory communities within and across cosmopolitan states, and infused by shared world order values' (Booth, 2007, p. 142). Such an approach to world security 'requires imagination', Booth asserts, 'but it is not another dreamworld', indeed, 'it rests on the immanent potential in the world today' (Booth, 2007, p. 148). Booth is quite clear about where that potential lies: 'Progressive global civil society informed by world security principles represents

critical theory's organised political orientation at this period of history'. (Booth, 2007, p. 457).

By concentrating thought on the idea of emancipation and action on global civil society, Booth argues in earlier work, a human rights culture may emerge over time to replace the dominant nuclear culture which had defined so much of post-1945 international politics, indeed

'a human rights culture must be intrinsic to any comprehensive notion of security (one that promises human security, and not simply the security of states or regimes), and that without such a construction of security there must be an indefinite postponement of the practices of sustainable peace' (Booth, 1999, p. 2).

What Booth recommends is a 'process utopian' approach (after Joseph Nye) in order to foster an emancipatory politics. The aim of such an approach 'is not to become overburdened by distant ideal structures, but to concentrate on reformist steps to make a better world somewhat more likely' (Booth, 1991a, p. 324. See also Booth, 1991b). Presumably such reforms would take time to evolve; a slow process of building respect for human rights driven by the greater involvement in world politics of a growing global civil society. In these ways Booth describes an open political project in which all can participate, indeed, the empowerment of individuals is central to it:

'The implementation of an emancipatory strategy through process utopian steps is, to a greater or lesser extent, in the hands of all those who want it to be-the embryonic global civil society. In a world of global communications few should feel entirely helpless. Even in small and private decisions it is possible to make choices which help rather than hinder the building of a world community. Some developments depend on governments, but some do not. We can begin or continue pursuing emancipation in what we research, in how we teach, in what we put on conference agenda, in how much we support Greenpeace, Amnesty International, Oxfam and other groups identifying with a global community, and in how we deal with each other and with students. And in pursuing emancipation, the bases of real security are being established' (Booth, 1991a, p. 326).



The focus on empowering individuals is present in Booth's recent work also. In *Theory of World Security* Booth highlights the work of 'ordinary people living extraordinary lives' as 'world citizens' (Booth, 2007, pp. 458-9). Such people hold the key to world security as much as any other form of agency, Booth argues:

'If enough people live globally – taking strength from each other – the structures that divide might yet melt into the air, as did those of feudalism, the divine right of kings and colonial empires in living memory, and – only yesterday – the structures of Soviet style communism' (Booth, 2007, p. 458).

This is Booth at his best, advocating an open, democratic form of political transformation, looking outside the Academy for inspiration and hope, considering the activist roots of a new global order.

However, the appeal to openness in Booth's early writings and in *Theory of World Security* is countered by the sheer urgency of the present, because grave challenges stand in the way of world security, Booth argues. Immediate decisions have to be made about the future of nuclear weapons, how to manage globalisation and population growth, the best way to protect the natural environment, to reform structures of global governance and to tackle 'unreason' – religious fundamentalism and virulent nationalism. These issues represent a 'decisional crisis' for the world's leaders (Booth, 2007, pp. 403-419). This crisis is framed by a 'structural crisis' produced by the long gestation of 'patriarchy, proselytising religion, statism, capitalism, race, and consumerist democracy', which 'have conspired together to create a distinctive global sociology which does not work for the majority of people in the world, or for nature as a whole' (Booth, 2007, p. 402).

Moreover an all encompassing 'epochal crisis' is at hand which envelops these two challenges (Booth, 2007, p. 398). Booth's elaboration of this notion consists of a thought experiment in which he claims that an 'omniscient God'

making the 'broadest generalisations' about the current state of humanity might propose that the world's first 'Global Age' is currently out of control, and that humans have not made as much progress as they might think because technological advances are relatively recent and have not been matched with developments of collective wisdom or concern for perpetual global inequality (Booth, 2007, pp. 399-400).

These three sets of crises, decisional, structural and epochal, converge in the present to create what Booth terms, in an updated formulation of E. H. Carr's famous work, a 'New Twenty Years' Crisis' which is described as 'a unique world-historical challenge' (Booth, 2007, p. 396). If this great challenge, which takes place in the context of 'a more general crisis facing the world in the first half of the twenty-first century' called 'The Great Reckoning', is not met in the first two decades of the century, then by the middle of the century 'human society faces the prospect of a concatenation of global turmoil unlike anything in the past' (Booth, 2007, p. 2).

There are, then, two distinct understandings of time in Booth's work. One points to the gradual process of emancipation which activist-citizens, thinking and acting globally, can help to bring about; the other points to the politics of the 'now', and injects a sense of urgency to discussions of political action. The first understanding, which argues that collective action would help to create a more emancipated order, embraces the politics of long process, and all those who seek to make a leap of what Booth terms the 'empathetic imagination' (Booth, 2007, p. 460). The second, however, embraces the politics of immediate crisis, which is by definition a politics which concerns all of humanity but which can only be acted upon by a small elite of key decision makers, given that structures of global

governance are 'poorly equipped to handle the most long-term and significant issues between states that relate to security conceived broadly' (Booth, 2007, p. 413).

By outlining the cocktail of crises which the world apparently faces, Booth leads the security as emancipation move away from the open-endedness of an ethically guided, critical theory inspired politics which was attempting to develop a new language for addressing global affairs shaped by the seductive concept of emancipation, and towards what is in fact a very traditional focus on the old language of threats, necessity and power politics. For Booth this is perhaps the 'realism' in his notion of 'emancipatory realism' (Booth, 2007, p. 90). Yet as a central part of his *Theory of World Security*, it serves to orientate the security as emancipation move towards closure, because it reduces all the possibilities of open-endedness, of ethics, of critical theorising, of thinking differently about security and insecurity - of emancipation itself - to addressing the heart and soul of *traditional* security studies: self preservation.

### *Critique 2: From Compatibility to Difference*

A second way in which the Welsh School directs the security as emancipation move towards closure concerns the relationship between Booth's theorising and other approaches to security. It has already been noted above that Booth's early work attempted to orientate the security as emancipation move towards an engagement with ethics and open-endedness. This came about as a result of Booth's own interaction with literature outside of traditional security studies, indeed, Booth describes how he 'suffered what some colleagues regard as a severe professional disorder, the symptoms of which involve believing that the study of international



relations can gain more from studying Foucault than NATO' (Booth, 1995, p. 109).

This was followed by a defence of disciplinary openness:

'The true renaissance in security studies these days is being brought about not by those seeking to prioritise and modernise the theories of peace and security that dominated the Cold War, but by those struggling to develop, at the end of a century of violence and change, a postrealist, postpositivist conception of security that offers some promise of maximising the security and improving the lives of the whole of humankind – the security studies of inclusion rather than exclusion, of possibility rather than necessity, and of becoming rather than being' (Booth, 1997a, p. 105).

Yet the security studies of inclusion that Booth advocates here was not entirely forthcoming. Although *Theory of World Security* is filled with references to a wider range of literature *beyond* the subdiscipline, key approaches *within* security studies are neglected, most notably poststructuralism and the constructivist inspired Copenhagen School. Booth defends this move.

In a section tellingly subtitled, 'Contending Approaches', which featured in an essay outlining the basis of *Theory of World Security*, Booth argues that poststructuralist authors 'celebrate insecurity, which I regard as a middle-class affront to the truly insecure' (Booth, 2005, p. 270.) Furthermore, he argues that such writers are closer to more conservative approaches than they might assume:

'Political realists and poststructuralists seem to share a fatalistic view that humans are doomed to insecurity; regard the search for emancipation as both futile and dangerous; believe in a notion of the human condition; and relativise norms. Both leave power where it is in the world: deconstruction and deterrence are equally static theories' (Booth, 2005, pp. 270-1).

In *Theory of World Security* itself, Booth argues that poststructuralism is 'invariably obscurantist and marginal, providing no basis for politics' (Booth, 2007, p. 468).

One reviewer of *Theory of World Security* regards Booth's overlooking of poststructuralist scholarship to be a serious oversight, arguing that the work of

authors such as David Campbell and Cynthia Weber tackle many of same issues as Booth, such as conflict, identity, sovereignty, ethics and nuclear weapons (Mutimer, 2008). This thesis shares that view, and challenges Booth's neglect of poststructuralism in two ways. First, by adopting the work of a scholar associated with integrating poststructuralism into IR, Jenny Edkins. The work of Edkins is used to understand the exclusionary nature of memorialisation in Vukovar, discussed in chapter 4. Secondly, by drawing heavily upon the work of Linklater the thesis accepts the benefits of interaction between poststructuralism and other critical approaches. This is because Linklater explicitly draws upon poststructuralism in developing his conception of universality and difference. This will be discussed further in the following chapter.

Booth's dismissal of poststructuralist thought is mirrored in his treatment of the Copenhagen School:

'Claims have been made that securitisation studies should be the next phase in the study of the theory and practice of security, but this would be mistaken, for the Copenhagen School is a curious combination of liberal, poststructural, and neorealist approaches. Not surprisingly, a bundle of conceptual problems and political issues is piled up by this curious theoretical mixture. The conceptualisation of the central themes of securitisation and desecuritisation are state-centric, discourse-dominated and conservative' (Booth, 2005, p. 271).

Neither poststructuralism nor the Copenhagen School feature heavily in Booth's *Theory of World Security* for these reasons. This is a curious development considering Booth's earlier comments regarding the need for openness and plurality. It is also intriguing given Booth's adaptation of Hannah Arendt's '*Perlenfischerei*' (pearl-fishing) method, which involves 'looking for wisdom not through the study of the history of ideas, genealogies, or categories of thinkers, but through plundering ideas that have survived and seem rich in possibility for one's purposes' (Booth,



2007, p. 3). Whilst Booth is content to scour far and wide for ideas, drawing upon Mahatma Gandhi, Ulrich Beck, Karl Deutsch and Immanuel Kant, he is also happy to ignore the growing and significant bodies of literature produced by scholars interested in poststructuralist and Copenhagen School approaches *within* security studies – scholars who, as with Booth's own work, are explicitly concerned with the relationship between security and ethics.

Furthermore, by neglecting poststructuralism and the Copenhagen School, Booth locks himself away from recent scholarship which attempts to build bridges between the Welsh School and other approaches (for example Floyd, 2007). If the security as emancipation move was to be truly open, in the way Booth suggests in the developmental stages of the Welsh School, it might be expected that continued engagement with contrasting – rather than contending – approaches would be encouraged rather than deterred. The danger for the future of the security as emancipation move is that its staunchest advocate, Booth himself, risks becoming synonymous with an approach to scholarship which draws lines of division between approaches rather than lines of mutually constructive comparison and compatibility. Once again, this shows a tendency towards closure, rather than openness.

### *Critique 3: The Absence of Voice*

In an important piece of self-reflection, worth quoting at length, Booth reveals how his involvement in the work of Amnesty International led to a profound change in his approach to the subdiscipline of security studies:

'The more I thought about the individual cases that are the staple of Amnesty's work, the more I thought about the significance of thinking about international relations from the perspective of individuals rather than states. For me, the experience of writing those first letters to governments about perfect strangers - victims of those governments - was a real turning point.



Here were some names and sometimes faces of the hitherto unseen casualties of the structures of international relations. It was not only war that produces casualties. This turning point was almost as vivid - although obviously neither as personally life threatening or other life saving - as it was for Oskar Schindler, in Steven Spielberg's film, when he focused, through all the carnage, on the solitary little girl in a red coat. At least this is how I read the moment in the film: the reality of gross human wrongs suddenly becomes clear in the image of a single stranger. One consequence of this visualisation for me was the wish to read literature previously ghettoized by realist ideology. As a result, individual victims came to be seen not simply as a feature of domestic politics, but as a part of an international system that, through a mixture of rationality and historical happenstance, had developed into the business of power politics rather than into the exploration of common humanity. The individual/bottom-up/victim perspective began to change what I thought about the state, state types, social power, security problems other than the military inventories of the superpowers, the state as the exclusive security referent (which legitimized nuclear deterrence), and states as a source of threat rather than as a source of security. The sovereign state came to be seen as an important part of the problem of insecurity in world politics, not the solution' (Booth, 1997a, p. 99).

What this passage illustrates is the importance of the approach to understanding security which this thesis seeks to deploy. The approach described by Booth above can be seen as one that seeks to understand the experience of insecurity as it is being lived. Booth starts with the individual and with attempting to understanding their particular predicaments in specific contexts, and from that starting point he extrapolates meaning which in turn leads him to question previous knowledge about world politics, most notably, the knowledge upheld and proclaimed by realism. What is also implied by the extract is that Booth felt sympathy and perhaps even solidarity with those victims, an assumption supported by the fact that Booth chose to write letters on their behalf.

Booth's testimony suggests in important ways the impact that can be had by considering insecurity as lived experience upon understandings of world politics and the relationship between self and other. The key point in the extract is that Booth came to see 'the significance of thinking about international relations *from the perspective of individuals*'. By engaging with the plight of the insecure other, Booth

came to question himself and his role in society, a move which had a profound impact upon his intellectual career. It is the nature of that engagement that is significant here, because Booth emphasises that he attempted to form a genuine empathetic relationship with strangers, that they were the people educating him, that he was the student and they in possession of knowledge and experience that could not be gained through traditional security studies. What is also important to note here is the fact that when Booth began the process of letter writing he had no idea where it would take him – the engagement was genuinely open-ended.

Yet within Booth's work there is also an attempt to define more specifically the nature of the engagement between theory and practice, and this produces a form of closure which limits the possibilities of engagement with people in circumstances similar to those Booth mentions the passage above. In *Theory of World Security*, Booth remarks that 'if human society is to be reinvented in an emancipatory direction, then thinking about doing must be given its due' (Booth, 2007, p. 198). This brings about a section in the book framed by a classic question of political theory: 'how might we act?' (Booth, 2007, pp. 198-206). Ultimately for Booth, this question is answered by reflecting upon what theory offers to others, as he argues that

'it is always legitimate to ask of any theory purporting to have something to say about security in world politics what it means for real people in real places. Theories about gender, deconstruction, emancipation or whatever remain abstract and incomplete unless they engage with the real by suggesting policies, agents, and sites of change, to help humankind move away from existing structural wrongs. Such engagement is never easy, and may not result in clear answers, but the test of a body of scholarship is whether it says anything meaningful about, or contributes however remotely or indirectly towards, the improvement of the security of individuals and groups in villages and cities, regions and states, and ultimately globally – and does this in ways that promote emancipatory aims' (Booth, 2007, p. 200).



It is important to reflect upon the differences between the two extracts used thus far in this section because they reveal a key movement towards closure with regards to the relationship between theory and practice in the Welsh School. That movement is captured by comparing a line from the first extract, 'the significance of thinking about international relations *from the perspective of individuals*', to a line from the second, referring to how theory must 'engage with the real by *suggesting policies, agents, and sites of change*, to help humankind move away from existing structural wrongs'.

What this comparison is attempting to highlight is that there has been a shift away from trying to understand the perspective of individuals who suffer the consequences of world politics, and towards the building of theory which is tasked with finding ways of changing the status quo and preventing more suffering. The emphasis has moved from the individual 'victim as educator' towards the more familiar ground of 'scholar as educator'. Theorists associated with the Welsh School have adapted Gramsci's notion of the 'organic intellectual' to summarise this position, in which academics work with social movements and other civil society actors to implement progressive change (see Wyn Jones, 1999).

The argument being made here is not that theory is unimportant. It is rather that there is something unpredictable, exciting and genuinely open about trying to engage with individuals from their own perspective, which Booth demonstrates so well when describing how he came to formulate the security as emancipation move, but which risks being lost when scholarship becomes embroiled in the act of suggesting possible changes to the status quo *more than* the act of listening to others.



Booth is adamant that any theory about emancipation and security should have something to say to those who have suffered from the consequences of world politics. Yet surely this is the wrong way to look at the relationship between theory and practice, between scholars and others. What, if anything, can a theory of security say to a father looking for the body of his lost son, or the woman caring for the boy who will never know his father, or the daughter who saw her father killed in the garden of the house he built with his own hands? These are real experiences that the author encountered in Vukovar, and it prompts the thought that there is perhaps more that such stories and individuals can tell scholars involved in security studies than the other way round. This theme will be raised again in subsequent chapters.

The point to note now is that the genuinely open engagement which Booth pursued when he began writing letters for Amnesty International, in which he attempted to empathise with people experiencing insecurity, is being lost in the process of defining how scholars who are sympathetic to the security as emancipation move should act. Booth advocates 'mutual synergy', in which 'theory arises out of practice, practice is shaped and modified as a result of theory, and theory develops in the light of practice (Booth, 2007, p. 198). Yet a more limited form of engagement exists, exemplified by a number of empirical studies inspired by the Welsh School, which often conclude with predictable suggestions for change rather than reflecting on an open engagement with the individuals they are concerned with. When the Welsh School is 'applied' in different ways the loss of radicalism becomes apparent; indeed many such studies, to be discussed below in this section, become little more than advocacy for '*more* civil society' and '*more* human security'. These are important points in themselves but do not go as far as they might within the security as emancipation move.

Many of the empirical studies which have sought to contribute to the Welsh School have been based upon the work of Booth and to a lesser extent Wyn Jones. One problem with these studies is that many do not question their work in the way that the above section has attempted to do, and the limitations of the Welsh School go unchallenged. The result is the reification of the Welsh School as a whole, and the production of an approach which is apparently unaware of its own limitations. In other words, a 'critical' approach to security is being developed which is insufficiently critical of itself. Examples of this tendency will be examined in this section.

Paul Williams provides a Welsh School approach to the study of Africa which illustrates many of the limitations of the approach (Williams, 2007). He affirms the Welsh School argument that 'the point of thinking about security is to affect political practices and outcomes on the ground' (Williams, 2007, p. 1022). He starts however by attempting to clarify the conceptual terrain which surrounds studies of Africa and proposes fundamental questions, themselves shaped by Booth's work:

'Whose version of the real world should we analyse? What is security, and whose security are we talking about? Which 'Africa' should we study? What should the relationships be between regional and global structures and processes? Who or what are the most appropriate referents for security? Who is best placed to deliver it? What principles should security policies promote? And whose answers to these questions should we listen to?' (Williams, 2007, p. 1022)

These are all important questions for getting beyond traditional thinking on security. It is also highly significant that Williams argues that if security is dependent upon relationships between humans then it makes sense to consider the insecurity of the most vulnerable groups, such as certain women in certain tribes in Africa (Williams,

2007, p. 1024). Such arguments and the questions raised above highlight some of the important steps taken by the Welsh School in constructing a new approach to security.

Problems emerge however when the analysis turns to the people that Williams wants to secure. He begins by listing the threats they face such as violence, health challenges and environmental degradation (Williams, 2007, pp. 1028-34), and then the sites where insecurity is experienced including war zones, shanty towns, displacement camps and rural peripheries (Williams, 2007, p. 1035). Having identified the key threats and the places where they are experienced, he then proposes a multi-tiered response to these issues based on action undertaken by domestic and global civil society like the West African Civil Society Forum, and institutions shaped by reformist elites such as the African Union Peace and Security Council (Williams, 2007, p. 1036-37). He ends with the laudable conclusion that however the threats are addressed, African voices must be at the fore.

To make the argument in a different way, the radicalism of the security as emancipation move is lost when Williams tries to apply it to a case study because he ends up arguing for more rights, more protection from harm, more dialogue - more liberal democracy. The argument is not that this is in any way a weak argument, or even an argument to be heavily contested. The argument is rather that the security as emancipation move could potentially offer more than what Williams is suggesting – perhaps even going beyond the conception of liberal democracy Williams advances.

Other studies follow this pattern. Eli Stamnes and Richard Wyn Jones use the Welsh School to inform a case study of Burundi (Stamnes and Wyn Jones, 2000). As with the Williams article discussed above they begin by setting out the



key questions the Welsh School seeks to ask, questioning the meaning of security as a concept, asking whose security is at stake, and what kind of security studies should develop (Stamnes and Wyn Jones, 2000, pp. 40-42). This discussion draws upon Booth and Wyn Jones heavily. As with the Williams piece on Africa, they argue that individual security must take precedence over national security, and then list the various threats faced by individuals in Burundi before exploring potential paths towards emancipation.

However, even after stating the Welsh School preference for emancipating people from insecurity, Stamnes and Wyn Jones are reluctant to provide an analysis of how this might come about, and instead, much like Williams, concentrate on applying a programme for change (Stamnes and Wyn Jones, 2000, p. 50). They suggest a focus on 'the development of unfulfilled potentials within the actual conflict situation as it stands, as part of an emancipatory process', citing negotiations between government, military groups and civil society which might bring about 'a more just and secure environment' (Stamnes and Wyn Jones, 2000, p. 51). They also suggest grassroots activist organisations as potential agents of change.

Yet there is no theory of agency or dynamic of action here, nor any real attempt to go further than pointing out several potentially progressive groups which might be able to contribute to an emancipatory process. Once again the analysis of an empirical case study fails to fulfil its radical potential. Negotiations and the development of civil society is important, but is not distinctive. The voices of the individuals being written about are curiously absent.

A similar pattern is followed by Stamnes in a piece on the UN mission in Macedonia (Stamnes, 2004). Stamnes argues that the UN mission contributed to a

process of emancipation in the following ways: deploying military forces and observing borders; election monitoring; facilitating meetings between political parties and youth organisations; employment generation; providing humanitarian aid, transport and infrastructure; and supporting women's organisations (Stamnes, 2004, p. 175).

The problem with this argument is not the conclusion that the UN can act as an agent of emancipation. The problem is that the security as emancipation move is not being pushed further. It would seem obvious to many that the UN would be capable of acting in ways which promote democracy, humanitarianism and security. The point is therefore that this seems a limited conclusion considering the study is informed by the security as emancipation move which is in itself full of more promise – the promise of unpredictability which comes about through genuine open-endedness. What Stamnes is really arguing is that the UN is capable of promoting liberal democracy, which leaves the Welsh School with an important but not particularly distinctive or radical argument, nor with an engagement which directly engages 'real people in real place' in an open exchange.

Graeme Cheeseman, who is also sympathetic to the security as emancipation move, contributes a discussion of Western defence policy-making to a key collection of papers in the development of the Welsh School (Cheeseman, 2005). Once again, however, his contribution amounts to a list of what is wrong with the particular case study when held up against the critical theoretical looking glass followed by a brief summation of what is required to address the issue. In this particular case Cheeseman argues that neorealism continues to be the dominant strand of thinking

within policy-making circles and academic communities around the world at a time when new thinking is required (Cheeseman, 2005, p. 80).

Following Booth, Cheeseman argues that new thinking is required in order to address the new times that have brought AIDS, transnational crime, New Wars, drugs and environmental degradation. For him, such a 'new and more complex security environment requires a much more democratic, empathetic, and cooperative approach to problem solving' (Cheesman, 2005, p. 82). As with many Welsh School orientated studies the author is strong on utilising critical theoretical insights to critique the status quo but fails to address the issues of reconstruction and engagement with the silenced beyond restating the need for more democracy, for empathy, more *good things*.

Another empirical study in the same volume, on the gendered nature of peacekeeping and the role of Canadian troops in Somalia, highlights the importance of understanding that soldiers are products of a specific, highly masculinised cultural process and are usually not immediately able to adjust to peacekeeping roles (Whitworth, 2005). This is an important point in itself, and certainly a necessary one for the more emancipatory politics favoured by Booth and his followers. However, the author does not problematise the nature of peacekeeping itself which may already be complicit in the production of the realist, state-driven international system which the Welsh School seek to transform. Furthermore, although Whitworth does raise the concerns of those real people in real places who suffered at the hands of the Canadian soldiers under whom they were supposed to have been protected, more could be said on the implications of their suffering for thinking about security and emancipation.



In a similar vein Jan Jindy Pettman raises the issue of how dominant theories of IR and security studies have maintained silences around the matter of colonisation without presenting any form of substantive engagement with those who have been silenced (Pettman, 2005). All the Welsh School empirical studies discussed here follow this pattern of stating that silences need to be addressed without actually addressing them, an approach that risks rendering the security as emancipation move open to the charge that it is little more than a new manifestation of the old and superficial liberal cry that pronounces, 'something must be done'.

Other empirical studies follow the trend. Paul Williams applied Welsh School thought to a case study of South African politics (Williams, 2000). Williams begins by expressing the benefits of a critical theoretical approach as opposed to a problem solving approach in relation to foreign policy, and proceeds to outline how such an approach can illuminate new understandings of foreign policy. Williams attempts to tie 'external' security problems with 'internal' socio-economic problems (Williams, 2000, p, 78). A critical security perspective therefore suggests that development is a crucial part of providing security, a position which builds upon Buzan's position regarding the importance of the economic sector of security. He argues that

'the government should prioritise poverty alleviation including a renewed commitment to electrification, housing, sanitation, affordable healthcare, education and employment schemes. This will mean rejecting the neo-liberal principles embodied in GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution scheme) and concentration instead on devising innovative ways to deal with the problems of poverty, unemployment and growing inequality (Williams, 2000, p. 83).

What his analysis ultimately comes down to is a call for South Africans to 'struggle for a more just and democratic world order' (Williams, 2000, p. 88). As with

previous empirical studies it is difficult to see what is distinctive about these proposals. What Williams is asking for is the transformation of the state into one which sees human security as a necessary component of national security, and which involves its own citizens in the formulation of foreign policy. The security as emancipation can go further than this, as subsequent chapters will show.

In a study of conflict resolution in Northern Ireland undertaken by Joseph Ruane and Jennifer Todd, they describe the process of conflict resolution in emancipatory terms as ‘a process by which the participants in a system which determines, distorts and limits their potentialities come together actively to transform it, and in the process transform themselves’ (Ruane and Todd, 2005, p. 238). An emancipatory approach to the Northern Ireland conflict would address the underlying causes of the conflict rather than seek to manage it, as a realist approach would suggest (Ruane and Todd, 2005, p. 251). This understanding of emancipation suggests that dialogue and understanding are central to it. However, once again the voices of those who live that process of emancipation are absent.

One way of understanding these limitations is in the context of a useful paper that outlines the potential pitfalls of approaches to security informed by the concept of emancipation. Mark Neufeld argued that it would be essential for any critical security approach to avoid the dangers of utopianism and elitism (Neufeld, 2004). The Welsh School, he argued, would need to

‘be attentive to the way in which the meanings and practices of security never float unattached, but are always embedded and embodied, always dependent on context for their content’.

The Welsh School would also need to guard against elitism as well, by

‘helping us to remain cognizant of the way meanings are created and changed through a process of real people acting to make history, though, of course, not necessarily in the circumstances in their own choosing’ (Neufeld, 2004, p. 22).

The argument made in this section can be summarised by stating that the empirical studies undertaken by the Welsh School have not sufficiently heeded this warning, and that the nature of the engagement undertaken by the Welsh School has been highly limited. This has several causes. One cause is that, as Stuart Croft highlights, the Welsh School is relatively small in scale and only a handful of scholars have dedicated substantial research projects to it (Croft, 2008). Another reason is that Welsh School scholars have, despite their appeal for greater engagement with ‘real people in real places’, been essentially theory driven. Indeed, Booth recognises that ‘to date, students of security from critical perspectives have been more familiar with engaging with critics at the theoretical than the empirical level’ (Booth, 2007, p. 265). When it comes to the matter of ‘real people in real places’, there has been a deafening silence within the Welsh School.

### *Conclusion*

This opening chapter has attempted to assert a critical reading of the Welsh School of security studies. It has argued that the Welsh School has orientated the security as emancipation move towards closure, and that this is to the detriment of the approach as a whole. The security as emancipation move promised to be genuinely open-ended, yet the Welsh School has conditioned the move into an approach to the study of security which is not as inclusive or radical as it initially claimed.

In contrast to what these studies attempt it would be preferable to use the theory as a guide to identifying locations where emancipatory practices might be evident and then to understand such practices in their own context, rather than using



them to support the theory or to use theory to prescribe remedies. Such an approach would require a re-emphasis on the politics of long process rather than the politics of immediate crisis, because empathy requires patient engagement rather than a frantic call to action. It may also involve a more open standpoint towards other approaches to security.

This would involve moving beyond the Welsh School, as the thesis will seek to show, because the tendencies towards closure identified above are due in large part to the perceived need to define what the Welsh School stands for. From being a body of critical knowledge about security, the Welsh School has evolved into a programme for security, for which ‘a checklist for critical thinking about security’ is provided (see Booth, 2007, pp. 277-8). In doing so the unpredictability and dynamism of open engagement is lost.

The security as emancipation move is most radical when it is seen through Linklater’s interpretation of emancipation as dialogic communities. This view is implied in Booth too, but is not explicitly argued. It is most radical because it promises the enabling of a future without harm to be built which embraces the contingency and open-endedness of practice. The signs of this are evident within some civil society groups, as future chapters will show. The point however is not to capture these practices as somehow belonging to the Welsh School, but to try to understand them on their own terms and in their own context.

This raises the issue of the extent to which the security as emancipation move *should be* housed within any particular ‘school of thought’, a question which will become more prominent in the empirical chapters of the thesis. An approach to the

security emancipation move which embraces security and insecurity as lived experience is required. This will be outlined further in the following chapter.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Beyond the Welsh School: A Theoretical Framework**

#### *Introduction*

The previous chapter outlined a critique of the Welsh School and argued that the security as emancipation move has been orientated towards closure in three ways: from process to crisis, from compatibility to difference, and towards an unspoken acceptance of the absence of voice. This chapter proposes a move beyond these limitations which understands the security as emancipation move in the context of Andrew Linklater's adaptation of Habermasian discourse ethics. The purpose of the chapter is to outline an approach which sees security as emancipation through lived experiences of security and insecurity.

Contextualising the security as emancipation move explicitly within discourse ethics allows for the more radical and open-ended tendencies of that move to be developed, because the discourse ethic, and its practical-political manifestation – the dialogic community – embrace by their nature the idea of openness. The idea of openness promises a perpetual dialogue between participants in which nobody can presuppose outcomes and nobody can know for certain who will learn what and from whom. The discourse ethic is also explicitly concerned with the harm done by and to others, and challenges the assumptions upon which human beings are excluded. Dialogic communities embrace sensitivity to difference and encourage empathetic engagement, sentiments which can inform research strategies as well as normative goals.

The contextualisation of the security as emancipation move within discourse ethics seeks to reclaim a quality which, as was argued in chapter 1, has been pushed



away as the Welsh School was orientated more towards the forms of closure discussed previously. That quality, which was described in Booth's account of the importance of engaging with Amnesty International in explaining his eventual rejection of traditional security thinking, can be understood as an attempt to understand the predicament of the insecure other. Because any conception of security as emancipation is also concerned with a notion of progress, the transition from insecurity to security is also important. Subsequently therefore, attempting to understand the predicament of the insecure other, how humans experiencing insecurity in different forms struggle within their specific, local contexts, and how they attempt to move towards a life of greater security, is the key characteristic of an approach that attempts to understand security as emancipation through lived experiences.

In this way, therefore, the engagement with the insecure other to which Booth testifies is held up as an example of how the security as emancipation move should go forward, but it is in the context of Linklater's work on discourse ethics and world politics that such progress should be made, thus pulling Booth in a slightly different direction to the one outlined in *Theory of World Security*. Moreover, although Linklater's work is embraced in this way, it is also twisted in a different empirical direction from that which he intends; from a focus on macro-dialogic arrangements which sees the discourse ethic as embodied in large institutions such as the European Union, to a focus on dialogic practices in localised contexts. At times, such practices take the form of what are termed in this thesis as micro-dialogic communities.

This approach extends and develops some strands of thought within critical IR theory which emphasise the need to ground notions of emancipation in embodied

actors (Patomäki, 2003; Eckersley, 2007). Scholars sympathetic to the critical turn in IR have raised the concern that unless concepts developed by critical theory are rooted in concrete practices they risk appearing utopian (Diez and Steans, 2005, p. 128). It also recognises that key contributors to critical IR theory have been disappointed that the critical turn in IR, which occurred in conjunction with the development of critical approaches in security studies, has not led to a growth of emphatic understandings of those who are studied. Indeed, 'greater attention to the self-understanding of the world's least advantaged' is required by critically minded scholars, it has been argued (Murphy, 2007, p. 118).

Furthermore, it develops a theme discussed elsewhere regarding the 'question of how IR is communicated and experienced through the intersubjectivities of everyday life for people normally hidden or thought of as insignificant and powerless in traditional IR' (Constantinou *et al*, 2008, p. 9). Such an approach is developing in other fields of IR, such as postcolonialism, where it has been noted that the embodied experiences of indigenous practices reveal new, critical discourses on 'the international' (Shani, 2008, p. 724). It also continues previous discussions, also prompted by Linklater's work, regarding the appropriate response to 'voices from below' (Bühler, 2002). The turn to Linklater therefore opens a path to wider debates in the discipline to which scholars sympathetic to the security as emancipation move can contribute and draw from.

In keeping with the sentiments expressed above individuals are placed at the centre of security analysis, as Booth argues they should. This is done in the context of a framework of meaning provided by Linklater. In making these arguments an engagement between the work of Booth and Linklater is opened which runs

throughout the thesis, and which challenges and supports aspects of their work in equal measure, thus creating a dynamic through which different shades of the security as emancipation move can be explored.

The chapter begins with that engagement, making the case for the contextualisation of the security as emancipation within discourse ethics by showing how dialogue – Linklater’s central theoretical building block – is already central to Booth’s theory of security. The chapter then proceeds to the specifics of the theoretical framework itself, recognising that a move to understand security as emancipation through lived experience still requires a theoretical framework. Two key concepts from Linklater’s scholarship, the dialogic community and the totalising project, which frame the empirical analysis to follow, are introduced. The relationship between these two forms of political arrangements highlights the importance of political struggle within processes of emancipation, which returns the discussion to Booth’s emphasis on global civil society and the role of individuals.

Attempting to understand how such practices *play out* in specific contexts is the essence of engaging the discourse ethic as a research strategy. This move helps to counter some of the criticisms made of Linklater’s work which are also discussed in this chapter. The chapter then links the theoretical discussions to the actual empirical focus of this thesis by discussing what is meant by the notion of utilising the discourse ethic as a research strategy and outlining the methods used. Finally, and as a way of closing the opening part of the thesis, the chapter discusses how the approach outlined here manages to orientate the thesis away from the closures discussed in chapter 1 and towards a more open-ended form of scholarship.



### *Opening an Engagement between Booth and Linklater*

The contextualisation of the security as emancipation move within discourse ethics, which is a product of an engagement between the work of Booth and Linklater, starts here by outlining the ways in which their works overlap. Dialogue and interaction between the members of different communities is a central element to Booth's theory of security, and subsequently Booth draws heavily upon Linklater in making his arguments. Booth describes Linklater's work on discourse ethics as 'theorising *for* common humanity, and as such (it) is basic to any theory of world security' (Booth, 2007, p. 57). 'Discourse ethics', argues Booth, 'are a key feature of emancipatory politics' (Booth, 2007, p. 58).

Given the emphasis Booth places on the threats and crises discussed in chapter 1, there is a long journey to be had from the starting point of a threefold framework of emancipation, through tackling the current state of global politics and towards the vision Booth outlines of world security underpinned by overlapping emancipatory communities. Clearly dialogue plays a key role here in the negotiation of that process, a point Booth recognises by arguing that 'there will be no emancipatory community without dialogue' (Booth, 2007, p. 272).

Despite the major role played by dialogue in his theory, the *Perlenfischerei* method, which draws together a very wide range of literature both within and beyond security studies, does not allow him to explore this aspect of the theory in depth. This is not necessarily a problem because scholars sympathetic to Booth's security as emancipation move can probe the depths of his theory and/or develop his arguments in new ways. As Booth argues, 'our work as academics, like ourselves, should never be regarded as finished. Our books and articles should be seen as explorations not

destinations, and so should our own individual lives' (Booth, 1997a, p. 101-2). *Theory of World Security* may not offer a comprehensive theory in itself, but it is a genuine exploration of the relationship between emancipation and security in the context of empirical realities, informed not only by great learning but also profound concern for the future of humanity.

Even so, if Booth's work is to be built upon, as this thesis seeks to, it may be necessary to move beneath the *Perlenfischerei* method and to explore the specific ideas from which Booth draws inspiration. Given that dialogue is central to Booth's theory, and by extension to the Welsh School, it seems appropriate to build future explorations of the security as emancipation move not only upon Booth's scholarship *but also upon* the work of the scholar who has arguably done more than any other contemporary thinker within the discipline of IR to consider the nature and significance of dialogue in relation to world politics: Andrew Linklater. The argument being made here is that it is better to explore Booth's security as emancipation move in the context of Linklater's adaptation of Habermasian discourse ethics, which has the added benefit of moving away from the tendency to close down some of the openings made possible by Booth's security emancipation move which occurred as the Welsh School evolved, as discussed in the previous chapter.

This added benefit is made possible because of Booth's own approach to practice. In remarks about the relationship between ends and means, he argues that 'some end might be very distant, but the means that are its equivalent are not; they can be employed at once' (Booth, 2007, p. 256). Booth also uses Gandhi's aphorism, 'be the change you wish to see in the world', to describe his view on the relationship between means and ends (Booth, 2007, p. 455). The implication of

dialogue being central to Booth's emancipatory process, coupled with Gandhi's sentiment, is that academic research itself should also be informed by dialogic principles. This opens a door to the notion of understanding the security as emancipation move through lived experience. This point will be returned to later in the chapter, but it is first necessary to outline Linklater's discourse ethics so that its key aspects can be taken forward into the empirical analysis to follow in parts 2 and 3 of the thesis. Two specific concepts stand out, the dialogic community and the totalising project, and will be utilised to frame the empirical analysis to follow in subsequent chapters.

#### *The dialogic community*

This section describes the idea of the dialogic community, drawing upon the work of Linklater in *The Transformation of Political Community* (Linklater, 1998). Linklater's work takes place within a broader context of what has been termed 'emancipatory international relations', in recognition of the growing impact of critical social theory upon the discipline (Spegele, 2002). His work has made an important contribution to the integration of later Frankfurt School critical theory into IR, along with that of other scholars. (For an overview of the Frankfurt School, see Held, 1980. See also Devetak, 2007, and Weber, 2007, for recent examples of the uses of this particular strand of thought in IR theory).

As was made clear in the previous section, dialogue is central to Booth's conception of emancipation. The aim of this section is to capture a deeper understanding of dialogue and of the nature of dialogue in political contexts. Once these understandings have been established a conception of emancipation as practice is enabled, which places the thesis in a stronger position to explore the security as



emancipation move through lived experiences. Following Linklater, then, the essence of the dialogic community can be defined in these terms:

‘The willingness to engage wildly different human beings *qua* human beings, in a dialogue which assesses the rationality of the practices of exclusion, is the hallmark of the communication (dialogic) community’ (Linklater, 1998, p. 87).

Linklater’s comments here build upon arguments made by Richard Rorty (see for example Rorty, 1989; Rorty, 1990, Rorty, 1991). This enthusiasm for interaction would rest upon the belief that the only criteria for inclusion would simply be the status of being human. The dialogic community is thus radically open, but this also involves – as a guard against ethnocentrism - participants accepting that they may be convinced by an opposing argument (Linklater, 1998, p. 87). It is within this site that humans would be able to deal with the differences between competing ethical codes.

Dialogue is obviously central to these arguments and Linklater utilises the procedures set out by Jürgen Habermas to define authentic dialogue. Three points stand out here:

- i. By convention no person or ethical position can be excluded from dialogue in advance.
- ii. True dialogue only exists when participants accept that there is no a priori certainty about who will learn from whom, and subsequently all participants must accept reciprocal criticism.
- iii. Participants must be prepared to question their own truth claims, to accept the claims of others and to be prepared to be moved by the force of the better argument (adapted from Linklater, 1998, p. 92).

The purpose of these procedures is not to offer solutions to debates, but to enable individuals to express their ethical claims freely and equally and with the promise of compromise or consensus (Linklater, 1998, p. 92). Dialogic relations would ensure that norms would not be valid ‘unless they can command the consent of everyone whose interests stand to be affected by them (Linklater, 1998, p. 91).

The dialogic community does not offer solutions to all conflict as dialogue 'may never come to an end' (Linklater, 1998, p. 96). Dialogue provides the opportunity to discover whether the ethical beliefs of one social group have transcultural validity, yet groups holding certain beliefs may fail to persuade other groups that such beliefs are valid. Indeed, 'dialogue may result in an intersocietal consensus that there is a duty to rescue all human beings (an example of an ethical belief) but it may reveal irreconcilable disputes about the moral significance of differences' (Linklater, 1998, pp. 86-87).

Dialogic communities however do offer the possibility of moral progress, which can be defined as

'the widening of the circle of those who have rights to participate in dialogue and the commitment that norms cannot be regarded as universally valid unless they have, or could command, the consent of all those who stand to be affected by them. Moral progress involves a movement beyond provincial forms of life to a thin universalism in which discourse is the means by which the radically different employ in their efforts to explore the possibility of an engagement about the principles of coexistence' (Linklater, 1998, p. 96).

One implication of this statement is that dialogic communities may start as very small units of social arrangement which can expand over time. This will have an important bearing on the empirical analysis to follow. For Linklater, examples of this process include the abolition of slavery and the evolution of norms regarding the protection of civilians in war (Linklater, 1998, p. 87).

As such the expansion of dialogic communities is closely associated with what Linklater terms moral-practical learning, drawing again upon Habermas. There are three stages of such learning:

'At the level of pre-conventional morality, subjects obey norms fearing that non-compliance will lead to sanctions imposed by a higher authority; at the level of conventional morality, they obey norms from a sense of loyalty to



existing social groups or peers; at the level of post-conventional morality, subjects stand back from authority structures and group loyalties and ask whether they are complying with principles which have universal validity' (Linklater, 1998, p. 91).

It is this latter state of moral-practical learning which involves 'levels of critical disengagement from authority patterns or group norms and unqualified openness to the perspectives of others'. Discourse ethics emerges from these complicated processes of learning, indeed; 'discourse ethics is the apex of post-conventional moral reasoning' (Linklater, 1998, p. 91). The dialogic community not only results from transformation but facilitates it also.

As well as describing the nature of dialogic communities Linklater also discusses the interpersonal skills that would be required in such arrangements. Using Habermas, Linklater asserts that 'at the level of practice, discourse ethics requires hermeneutic insights into the nuanced relationships between abstract moral principles, specific social contexts and particular human needs'. The ethics of care and justice are 'two sides of the same moral coin' in this sense, 'by bringing finely-tuned hermeneutic moral skills and interpersonal sensibilities to bear on the implementation of public norms' (Linklater, 1998, p. 94). For Linklater discourse ethics should be committed to engaging such hermeneutic skills; indeed, 'empathetic cooperation between individuals with all their particularities, and the search for mutual comprehension of their respective needs and contexts, is the starting-point of discourse ethics' (Linklater, 1998, p. 95).

This discussion of dialogic communities above has focused on their internal characteristics, their relationship to moral learning and the interpersonal skills that they require in practice. The aim has been to present the dialogic community as a central concept in the thesis and dialogic relations as a central theme. The next stage



in the chapter involves outlining what Linklater, after Corrigan and Sayer, terms the totalising project (Corrigan and Sayer, 1985). As the antithesis of the dialogic community, it is important to understand the totalising project and the relationship between these two distinct forms of political arrangements, as subsequent analysis will show.

### *The totalising project*

The totalising project can be understood as 'the efforts made by central governments to mould homogenous national communities and to accentuate the differences between citizens and aliens in order to meet the challenges of inter-state war' (Linklater, 1998, p. 6). The process marries citizenship, nationality, territoriality and sovereignty (Linklater, 1998, pp. 50-1). One consequence of the totalising project is the emergence of social hierarchies within societies (Linklater, 1998, p. 26). Another is the estrangement between societies (Linklater, 1998, p. 25). Neo-realism has accepted the totalising project and only allows for alternatives to the modern state as a consequence of fate or chance (Linklater, 1998, p. 27).

For Linklater, the modern idea of citizenship emerged out of the struggle against unjust exclusion which the totalising project caused (see Linklater, 1998, ch. 4). The idea of citizenship can be broadened to encompass non-nationals, Linklater argues, as a means to expanding dialogic communities. Such a move 'encourages the emergence of new forms of political community in which the potential for higher levels of universality and difference is realised, and in so doing, transcends the limitations of the Westphalian era' (Linklater, 1998, p. 45). The most effective way of achieving this, he argues, is by institutionalising broader conceptions of citizenship in bodies such as the European Union.

The evidence to be discussed in chapters 6 and 8 suggests that it is not only the idea of citizenship that can enable the expansion of dialogic communities. Interview material from Vukovar suggests that the experience of war can also lead to concern about unjust exclusion and the development of emancipatory, dialogic practices. This is to suggest that the emergence of the modern idea of citizenship as a reaction to the totalising project is just one resource that can be harnessed to expand the realm of dialogic communities. Additional moral and practical resources emerge from struggles against the totalising project and exist in efforts to facilitate dialogue between opposing sides in the aftermath of war.

The totalising project reached its high point in the early twentieth century, Linklater asserts (Linklater, 1998, p. 157). As chapters 3-5 suggest, however, important aspects of the totalising project can be seen in contemporary post-war states, such as Croatia. Linklater also argues that globalisation presents new challenges for the totalising project (Linklater, 1998, p. 34). Such challenges, however, can also be seen within as well as above the state, as chapters 6 and 8 suggest. Although the totalising project is still a key concept in this thesis, subsequent chapters therefore offer a different interpretation of the relationship between the totalising project and dialogic communities.

### *The relationship between dialogic communities and the totalising project*

For Linklater, the relationship between the totalising project and the expansion of dialogic communities hinges on citizenship. The idea of citizenship emerged as a response to the totalising project and is now the most significant moral resource within existing social arrangements, and can be harnessed by agents to make

political communities more open to discourse ethics, he argues. The idea of citizenship allows for the further expansion of dialogic communities.

This thesis does not deviate from Linklater's proposition that one outcome of the totalising project are efforts to transform it. However, rather than locating the site of transformation in institutions, this thesis places emphasis on civil society as a site of change. Furthermore, this thesis suggests that in the immediate aftermath of war – in this case a violent expression of the totalising project – the moral and practical resources needed for challenging existing social arrangements through the expansion of dialogic communities can be witnessed. Chapters 6 and 8 present this evidence.

It is important to note that Linklater does provide for such a view to an extent, even if his work does not elaborate much upon it. Linklater states that 'sensitivity to unjust forms of exclusion and the normative attachment to dialogue are historical products' (Linklater, 1998, p. 110). The crucial matter here is the nature of the processes which led to the production of challenges to unjust forms of exclusion. Linklater offers some direction as to their character, asserting that 'societies which question the moral significance of racial, cultural, ethnic and gender differences are the result of complex processes of social change which have been influenced by *various forms of political struggle and resistance*' (Linklater, 1998, p. 110; emphasis added).

The point here is to underline that dialogic communities are the result of human action against the totalising project. To emphasise the point further, Linklater argues that 'no cunning of reason oversees the development of dialogic communities; no teleology has steered them to this point, guarantees their future



development or underwrites their survival' (Linklater, 1998, p. 110). Dialogic communities, then, result from the actions of human beings in a struggle for more inclusive and just social and political arrangements. In this way, although he does not elaborate upon the point in much depth, Linklater allows space for actions within civil society to contribute to emancipatory processes through their political struggles.

Linklater, however, does not provide much more guidance as to the nature of these political struggles. As critics have noted, his work remains highly abstract and lacking in empirical focus (Chan, 1999; Elshtain, 1999; Bühler, 2002; Brassett and Higgott, 2003). This thesis takes note of these criticisms in arguing for a move towards a focus on security and emancipation as lived experience. In order to conceptualise those forms of struggle which can produce more dialogic arrangements, it is to the idea of global civil society and also to Booth that the discussion can return.

### *Global civil society as a site of local struggle*

As the previous chapter made clear there are various problems with Booth's work, however, one specific aspect of that body of scholarship is very useful at this point. Whereas Linklater offers only an implicit affirmation of the values of civil society, Booth explicitly highlights civil society as being a site of new thinking and practices with regards to security – a site of struggle and change (Booth, 2007, pp. 455-8). Other scholars have also noted the centrality of civil society and social movements to emancipatory practices (Pieterse, 1992).

This thesis takes this claim seriously; however, it does not replicate Booth's understanding of civil society as being the arena in which NGOs always pursue

cosmopolitan values. Certainly these values are pursued by NGOs, as chapters 6 and 8 show. Yet chapter 7 will illustrate the ways in which civil society is also an arena in which the some values more associated with the totalising project are upheld and accepted as well as contested. Civil society is thus a site of struggle in itself as well as a site of struggle against the totalising project.

In this light Brassett and Smith provide a useful understanding of global civil society. Global civil society is more ambiguous than those who emphasise the role of 'progressive' social movements and NGOs suggest, they claim. They emphasise the diversity and disagreement within global civil society over aims, strategies and the absence of solidarity, and characterise global civil society as a space of debate and activity, or an 'affective arena' (Brassett and Smith, 2010). As chapters 6, 7 and 8 suggest, global civil society is a site of contestation, a proposition which becomes clearer when the emphasis turns to local manifestations of struggles against the totalising project. Dialogic struggles emerge within the affective arena of global civil society as reactions against the totalising project. One manifestation of this can be seen in the post-war environment of Vukovar, as will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

### *Answering the Critics of Discourse Ethics*

It can be argued that Linklater's theory of political transformation offers a more coherent approach to the concept of emancipation than any other theorist sympathetic to the security as emancipation move, as Linklater is (see Linklater, 2005a). The strength of Linklater's arguments have been noted by scholars. For Chris Brown, Linklater has satisfied the ambition of progressivist scholars to develop a critical international theory. This ambition, Brown argues, has existed at

least since Robert Cox made the distinction between ‘problem solving theory’ and ‘critical theory’, which Linklater accomplishes by presenting a more sophisticated analysis than the ‘warmed-up Marxism’ of many critical theorists, bringing the post-Marxist critical theory of Habermas into the centre of discussions in IR and moving beyond the critique of positivism that characterised much critical scholarship (Brown, 1998, pp. 224-5.)

Linklater’s work has however brought on criticism (see Jahn, 1998; Chan, 1999; Franke, 1999; Geras, 1999; Schweller, 1999; Walker, 1999; Diez and Steans, 2005; Vaughan-Williams, 2005; Shani, 2008). A consistent critique of the praxeological dimension of Linklater’s work regarding the relationship between theory and practice has been that he plays insufficient attention to the relationship between knowledge and action; that the normative and sociological insights he develops do not translate into political practice. In this sense, the criticism is that Linklater pays insufficient attention to scholars such as Booth whose work is infused with a number of empirical observations and analysis.

Jean Bethke Elshtain, arguing in this vein, asserts that Linklater ignores the Hobbesian world of pain, suffering and violence, and hence the question of implementation is left open (Elshtain, 1999.) Linklater is too abstract, she argues, asserting that ‘the language of “universality and difference” becomes, after a time, something of a slogan rather than a tough-minded imperative based on an equally tough-minded analysis’, adding that Linklater’s abstractions leave an open canvass which beg the question of ‘what would non-hierarchical conceptions of race, gender, and ethnicity look like?’ (Elshtain, 1999, p. 143).



This underpins what for Elshtain is the biggest problem, which is that 'it is nearly impossible to discern what this international dialogue is going to be about' (Elshtain, 1999, p. 143.) She also argues that 'there are millions of people in the world, unnoticed by Linklater, who have already widened "the moral boundaries of political community" in light of the universalistic communities in and through which they were formed', people who already have 'dual citizenship', and it is this recognition which informs her assertion that 'any compelling account of the whys and wherefores of a universalistic ethic must take account of such existing ethics and whether they do or do not do at least part of the heavy lifting Linklater calls for' (Elshtain, 1999. p. 144.)

This raises a key point which will be addressed in further detail below, which is that Linklater ignores a vast amount of already existing praxeological potential in the form of the citizens Elshtain points toward. It is a point which raises key issues relating to the type of praxeological approach Linklater advocates and to the nature of engagement that critical theory has with actually existing political situations. To remain with Elshtain a little more, however, she argues that many people in the world are barely surviving, and to them new conceptions of citizenship matter less than simple matters of life or death. In this way it is possible to argue that Linklater is neglecting both suffering and emancipatory potential. He is certainly, in Elshtain's opinion, ignoring the nature of institution-building that would have to take place in order to embody a global discourse ethic. The climax of Elshtain's brief yet penetrating critique is particularly useful for this discussion and should be quoted at length:

'He just doesn't take account of the rough realities of our fragile globe at century's end. His book is remarkably sanitised from conflict and torment

and fratricidal or suicidal struggle. I would urge him to consider what his hope for a universal dialogical community looks like if you put that in. I do not believe it would require that he give up on his basic commitments; indeed, I for one, would not want him to do that because the basic recognitions imbedded in his argument are keen and vital. The problem is that his overall unpacking of those themes wind up being terribly abstract, too thin by far to do the necessary conceptual, historical, and concrete political work he embraces. Concrete attention to how concrete communities have tried to work out particular and universalistic commitments would help' (Elshtain, 1999, p. 145.)

This passage will be returned to below, but before this it could be interesting to note

Linklater's reaction:

'Examples of how the ideas of citizenship and sovereignty, national identity and political community are being rethought in Europe and elsewhere are all too numerous, and they are noted in the last sections of my book. This may not be the detailed empirical analysis of actual structures and institutions which Elshtain seeks but it is one way of forging the connections between the more abstract discussion of universality and difference in social theory and changing conceptions of citizenship in actual states and in international law' (Linklater, 1999, p. 172.)

Most curiously, Linklater then argues that,

'I appreciate the merits of an approach which starts with, or offers a more detailed analysis of, political structures and institutions. However, Elshtain's empirical observations about the universal and the particular lead me to doubt whether this alternative starting-point or emphasis would yield radically different normative results' (Linklater, 1999, p. 172.)

This is an intriguing response for three reasons. Firstly, Linklater seems to miss the point of Elshtain's criticism, which was to say that if his normative aspirations are to become reality then he should pay more attention to political practice. Secondly, and following on from this, scholars working in critical IR theory have long called for empirical studies not because they might produce different normative results, but because they might lead to practical political changes. Thirdly, such a response seems to deviate from the principle that participants in a dialogue will not know what the outcome of an engagement will be.



The issue of how a philosophical defence of the dialogic community can or should relate to the 'real world' was later taken up by Ute Bühler. Taking the comments made by Jean Bethke Elshtain as a starting point he argues that the issue is not only how to listen to 'voices from below' but how to respond to them (Bühler, 2002.) He argues that Elshtain's comments that discourse ethics grows too abstract is a view held by many, but as he sees it is a problem built into the structure of discourse itself. In order to avoid the potential of replacing one totalising project with another, proponents of discourse ethics must not pre-judge the outcome of dialogue, and norms must be searched for by participants of that dialogue rather than philosophers, he argues.

This emphasis on procedure over substance is supposed to emphasise the respect for the voices of participants in engaged in real processes of moral augmentation. As Linklater argues, discourse ethics does not offer political blueprints, nor is it interested in strategy or tactics as much as uncovering the moral resources within existing social arrangements; it is primarily concerned with setting out the procedures to be followed enabling individuals to freely express competing moral claims, and to allow participants the possibility of resolving their moral differences through compromise or consensus. There is no attempt to pre-judge the outcome of such discursive practices, nor to refer to the supposed 'higher authority' of intellectual reasoning, rather, the decisions about substantive moral issues are left to agents themselves (Linklater, 1998, p. 92.)

Even so, there remains a problem when it comes to political practice, as discourse ethics offers no substantive guidance. Bühler draws on another theorist of democracy to argue that there must be a shift to 'the everyday world of ordinary



people' if scholars are interested in what the idea of a dialogic community will actually mean in practice (Blaug, 1998, p. 134 [cited in Bühler, 2002, p. 193.]) This entails reflecting on what it would mean to include 'voices from below' in Linklater's project, not just in the form of listening to those voices or representing them in an academic context, but actively listening and talking.

This is where the real challenge lies, as talking to people who have been excluded from the communication communities of academia is difficult. Voices from below ask whether the idea of discourse ethics is more than an idea. Because dialogic politics involves the participants themselves reaching solutions, moving beyond abstract declarations will involve a dialogue between scholars sympathetic to the dialogic ideal and 'voices from below'. This is essential for addressing the problem of how the normative vision might be transformed into practice, and if this cannot be achieved then such visions risk becoming irrelevant (Bühler, 2002, p. 196-7.)

The critique might be summarised in the following way: 'high modern IR does not do fieldwork. It is possible to do IR from a library armchair. Not all the world's emancipations arise, however, from texts' (Chan, 1999, p. 367-8.) A similar sentiment has been echoed elsewhere in relation to Linklater's theorising. Brassett and Higgott, for example, have argued that although such theories are 'laudable' they 'may be more exemplary of the limitations of normative theorising for the global polity than the possibilities that it could be *built*... (f)oundationalist arguments may simply waste too much intellectual energy attempting to define '*what is*' in order to legitimise their arguments for '*what should be*' (Brassett and Higgott, 2003, p. 31.)

These criticisms are particularly valid for the task of this chapter, but it might be said in Linklater's defence that it would be impossible for him to match his theoretical work with empirical studies of the same depth and quality; he has, after all, only one academic life. Nevertheless their criticisms must be taken seriously, and it is the task of other scholars to attempt to bring in the 'voices from below' into academic discourses about the nature of dialogic communities.

The comments made by the scholars mentioned above inadvertently open a path between Booth and Linklater. One of the criticisms of Booth's work highlighted in chapter 1 was that *Perlenfischerei* method resulted in a lack of theoretical cohesiveness. Linklater's approach is much more methodical and systematic than Booth's, yet as the criticisms above suggest the nature of the empirical engagement presented in Linklater's work leads to a sense of detachment in the analysis. The emphasis on history rather than contemporary praxis in Linklater's work has led some to characterise his contribution as historical sociology (Hobson and Lawson, 2008, pp. 432-3). Indeed, Linklater's later focus on 'civilising processes' and 'process sociology' over long stretches of time make it reasonable to assume that thoughts regarding the historical sociological dimension of his project occupy his mind more than the praxeological dimension (see Linklater, 2005b). It has been noted by observers that the praxeological dimension of Linklater's theory is underdeveloped, and that for an approach 'that is ultimately concerned with changing the world and not just understanding it, more clearly needs to be done' (Shapcott, 2010, p. 334).

The same cannot be said of Booth, however, whose work has always been primarily led by empirical observations in the present. In this way, Linklater can add a theoretical robustness to Booth's work, and Booth can provide a praxeological

focus on the contemporary impact of insecurity upon 'real people in real places' to Linklater's work. This dichotomy animates much of the analysis to follow, and ultimately finds expression in the notion of a micro-dialogic community which is discussed in chapter 8.

### *The discourse ethic as research strategy*

It is at this point that a bridge between this discussion of theory and the following chapters which offer empirical analysis needs to be built. The discussions above do not necessarily lead on to a study of the Croatian city of Vukovar. There is a missing link between well known arguments made by scholars like Booth and Linklater within the discipline of IR and the subdiscipline of security studies and the chapters that follow. This may well be the case for many studies which seek to discuss theory and empirical analysis together, although it is often not said as openly as it could be. That link is, of course, the individual researcher. It is necessary to offer a brief explanation of how that link was made. What follows is in essence a Boothian inspired attempt to see the personal and the political as one, an approach to academic study which has been central to the security as emancipation move (Booth, 1991a; 1997; 2007).

If there is going to be some form of engagement with 'real people in real places' as Booth and other Welsh School proponents suggest, it does not necessarily follow that the academic relinquishes his or her position of power. There are still choices to be made about which people to engage with, how, and for what purpose. The researcher has to make choices about the nature of the engagement. Such choices are in part informed by practicality – *who can I get access to?* They are also informed by interest – *what do I want to study?* There is an ethical dimension here.



Although practical constraints and individual interests may shape the boundaries of these ethical concerns, the researcher has to decide at some point what the nature of the engagement will be.

With regards to the thesis, this underscores the importance of having a comprehensive understanding of emancipation, as the previous sections in the chapter made clear. It is necessary to have such an understanding in order to be able to make the ethical choices about how to engage with those outside academia. Discourse ethics, especially the notion of the dialogic community, provides an ethical framework for making such choices.

However, the ethical framework which helps decide the nature of the engagement is also shaped by practicality and interests. This is where the link between the empirical analysis and the theory becomes clearer. To take the first issue, practicality, any researcher is limited by time, money and various personal circumstances. The production of this thesis owes a great deal to the fact that fieldwork had to be undertaken in separate trips each lasting around a month and organised around the university term times. Clearly this imposed limitations upon the nature of the engagement.

In conjunction with these practical restrictions are individual interests. The research presented here owes a great deal to the work of the author's father, a Methodist Minister based in the UK, who has since 1995 been involved with NGOs in eastern Croatia working in the field of peacebuilding. As the author developed an interest in critical approaches to security studies in general and the security as emancipation move in particular, the network which was brought to him through his father presented an accessible and intriguing line for research.

In this way the individual researcher became the link between a number of theoretical discussions which pointed to the role of discourse ethics and civil society on the one hand, and an avenue for empirical research which had not been explored from such a perspective on the other. Ethical reasoning in Booth and Linklater, personal interest and political practice in Croatia were brought together. It is the relationship between these three pillars which shape the thesis.

One further point should be made here. Earlier in the chapter Booth's remarks about the relationship between means and ends were highlighted, in which he says that 'some end might be very distant, but the means that are its equivalent are not; they can be employed at once' (Booth, 2007, p. 256). The Gandhian mantra, 'be the change you wish to see in the world', is also used by Booth as a way of informing the relationship between means and ends (Booth, 2007, p. 455). If discourse ethics is to inform the normative dimension of the approach being pursued in this thesis – which is to say that the dialogic community is a desirable endpoint – then it should also inform the way in which the thesis proceeds. Indeed, the research strategy pursued in this thesis is informed by dialogic principles, in the sense that not only is the dialogic community held up as part of a theory of emancipation, it also provides a way of thinking about the appropriate way to conduct empirical research in the context of the security as emancipation move.

If, as is the case in a dialogic community, no participant can presuppose the outcome of dialogue, then it could also be said that in trying to understand the predicament of the insecure other, which is the essence of understanding security as emancipation through lived experiences, the researcher should not presuppose or predict the outcome of such an engagement. Furthermore, the emphasis on empathetic engagement within discourse ethics, coupled with the Boothian aspiration

to live out one's desirable endpoint, suggests that a genuine attempt to empathise with the subjects of research should also characterise empirical study. This thesis therefore attempts to adopt the discourse ethic as a research strategy in the course of the empirical analysis to be conducted in parts 2 and 3, a point which will be returned to throughout the remainder of the thesis. With this important point noted, more can be said about the methods adopted for this study and which are informed by discourse ethics.

### *Methods*

The aim of this discussion is to inform the reader of how the research was conducted in Vukovar. The main method used was a series of semi-structured interviews, but observations of the physical cityscape of Vukovar and analysis of written testimonies also play a key part in the empirical analysis to follow. Each will be dealt with in turn. These methods were supplemented with a number of secondary sources read in the UK, as well as primary sources describing the war, translated from Croatian, read in the public library in Vukovar.

This thesis seeks to make a contribution to security studies primarily through the analysis of empirical material gathered during three fieldwork trips to the Croatian city of Vukovar, to make the case for an approach to the security as emancipation move which embraces security and insecurity as lived experience. The fieldwork trips took place in July 2008, April 2009 and September 2009, each trip lasting for three weeks. The trips to Vukovar were staggered in this way to allow the fieldwork to take place during university vacations, enabling the author to continue other important commitments during the university year. The fieldwork therefore lasted a total of nine weeks.



Although this may seem a short time compared to other empirical studies, which might last months or years, two points should be raised. The first is that the pressure of completing the thesis in three years (to coincide with funding restrictions as much as formal university registration periods) meant that fieldwork trips had to be restricted in order to limit the amount of material being analysed. The second is that even the relatively short period of time spent in Vukovar produced substantial findings in the form of interviews and observations which required careful analysis. Each of the trips were saturated with data gathering excursions as the small size of the city reduced travel time between appointments and site visits, which coupled with the success of the 'snowball' approach (to be discussed below) provided an intense and invigorating research environment. Given these factors the nine weeks of fieldwork provided ample material for the aim of the thesis.

The interview process followed an approach which can accurately be called 'snowballing'. For the initial research trip in July 2008, the author travelled to Vukovar with one contact, a local NGO worker who has been based in Vukovar for over ten years. The author was allowed to use office space provided by the contact, who then arranged interviews with his network of NGO workers and other local people. The author was then able to use this network to collect material from interviews. It should be noted that the kindness of strangers often plays a crucial role in any successful fieldwork trip. The interviews were semi-structured, and recorded on the record with the permission of all the participants. In roughly half the interviews a translator was used to overcome the language barrier.

The total number of formal interviewees is 37. Out of this number, 18 are individuals who work or have worked for small NGOs involved in peacebuilding efforts in Vukovar. The other interviewees include religious leaders, members of

other NGOs either not directly involved in peacebuilding or involved in peacebuilding but not in Vukovar, local and national politicians, the local tourist office, a journalist, a librarian, a prominent hospital director, students, youths and parents. Several of the interviewees were interviewed more than once according to their availability. A total of 51 separate interviews were recorded.

The purpose of the analysis to follow is not to present anything that should be seen as 'scientific', 'explanatory' or 'objective'. On the contrary, interpretation and subjectivity are embraced in this thesis. This is not to place interpretative methods on a pedestal above explanatory methods; there is a place for a broad range of methodological approaches in political analysis. However, for the purposes of understanding emancipation through lived experiences an interpretative approach allows a greater degree of flexibility in the analysis.

This interpretative approach extends to non-verbal sources. During the fieldwork trip a diary was filled with observations and thoughts. Many photographs were also taken, the author's own unless otherwise stated, and will be particularly useful in chapter 4. It is important to understand the context in which emancipatory practices take place in order to make the point that although there may be a universal quality to the idea of emancipation, in the sense that each individual has a right to engage in a dialogue about anything which may affect their lives, the exact nature of the emancipatory act will always be unique to the specific context. The approach used in this thesis demonstrates this.

One useful outcome of conducting the fieldwork in three stages was that on each return visit to Vukovar the peculiarity of the reconstruction process when compared to the multiethnic composition of the city became clearer. Living in

Vukovar even for a short time, and returning to the city on subsequent occasions, left the author with the impression that the multiethnic composition of the city is not reflected in dominant modes of memorialisation, a sentiment which informs chapter 4.

This conclusion was reached as a result of time spent walking through the city to interview research subjects, sitting on public benches writing up fieldwork notes, eating lunch and drinking coffee in cafes and restaurants – simply by being a foreigner trying to work, make friends and get by in a small city. The point here is that it is possible to see the research process either as a long chain of planned activities, or in a more intangible sense which would incorporate the unplanned thought processes and observations which surround the planned activities.

#### *Interview coding*

The interviews are used throughout the empirical chapters and referenced accordingly. This is done in the following manner. Each of the forty-nine transcripts were numbered by the author. When an interview is referred to in the text the letter 'I' is used to indicate that an interview is being used as the source, followed by the number of the interview and the year in took place. For example, the first transcript would be referenced as '(I1, 2008)', the second as '(I2, 2008)' and so on. A numbered list of interviews is available as an appendix. Off the record comments will refer to anonymous sources and will be referenced as '(Off record, 2009a)', with the letter referencing undisclosed coding to ensure the comments can be accurately traced by the author.

#### *Towards a genuine openness*

It was discussed in the first chapter how the Welsh School orientates the security as emancipation move towards three forms of closure: from process to crisis, from



compatibility to difference, and towards a tacit acceptance of the absence of voice. The approach outlined in this chapter, by contextualising the security as emancipation move within discourse ethics, orientates such concerns in a different direction.

Linklater's historical sociological analysis, which sees emancipatory developments as outcomes of long processes of struggle against unjust forms of exclusion, explicitly locates emancipation in the politics of long process rather than in the context of an impending crisis, as is the case in Booth's later work. The politics of process favours a style of analysis which is unhurried and more alert to the everyday struggle for security than the politics of crisis. The seeds for coping with future insecurity may well be in the present already, and it is grasping that notion that the politics of process is concerned with. Discourse ethics is also radically inclusive of all perspectives, even if dialogue results in profound disagreement between participants. The point is that no perspective should be prevented from entering into a dialogic arrangement, even though that could well be the outcome of such an encounter.

### *Conclusion*

This chapter has argued for contextualising the security as emancipation move explicitly within the discourse ethics espoused by Andrew Linklater. It has continued to assert the idea that security as emancipation should be understood through lived experiences of security and insecurity, and that the attempt to understand the predicament of the insecure other, how humans experiencing different forms of insecurity struggle in their specific contexts and attempt to live lives of greater security, is the defining characteristic of such an approach.

The work of Andrew Linklater has been used to develop a framework of understanding which sees the dialogic community as normative ideal. Movements towards that ideal, which can take the form of a struggle by agents working within global civil society against the totalising project – a marriage of citizenship, territoriality, nationality and sovereignty – are an important part of emancipatory processes. Booth's remarks regarding the relationship between means and ends compels scholars sympathetic to these arguments to pursue research strategies which also adopt the discourse ethic, and which seek to understand the situation of human beings living lives of insecurity and struggling for greater security. The dialogic ideal suggests that to attempt to empathise with other humans in such situations may result in unforeseen outcomes, ensuring that such an engagement is truly open-ended.

Contextualising the security as emancipation move within discourse ethics not only provides a deeper framework of meaning with which to approach the study of world politics. When seen in light of Booth's emphasis on living out one's values, the discourse ethic also informs scholarship itself, and implies that research should be driven by dialogic principles and the accompanying sentiments of sensitivity and empathy. With these comments in mind, the thesis now turns to the second part which introduces the the empirical contribution. The analysis to follow can be seen as a critical reconstruction of the ideas raised by Booth and Linklater in an empirical context.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Disjuncture and Settlement: War and Peace in Vukovar**

#### *Introduction*

This chapter begins the empirical analysis of the thesis by turning the discussion to Vukovar. In doing so it seeks to understand a specific instance of insecurity, experienced locally and conveyed through eyewitness testimony as much as secondary analysis. Attempting to understand security as emancipation through lived experiences necessitates a description of specific cases of insecurity as a starting point for trying to understand how individuals in their local contexts struggle for more secure ways of living.

It is important to have an understanding of what happened in Vukovar because much of what follows in subsequent chapters refers to local manifestation of the impact of the war in the former-Yugoslavia. Without an understanding of how the war impacted upon individuals in their local contexts the war remains abstract. It may well be impossible to truly empathise with those who were in Vukovar during the siege, yet it is possible to present images using primary and secondary material through which their experience can be imagined.

It has also been noted that attempting to reconstruct the events that occurred in places like Vukovar, Srebrenica and Sarajevo is an essential part of the process of post-war justice (Halpern and Kideckel, 2000, p. 8). As institutions such as the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and a number of local courtrooms have found, however, reconstructing the events of 1991 is a difficult process, given the role played by the memory and interpretation of traumatic events. Such limitations must be recognised and worked with; indeed, they are an important



part of any attempt to understand security and emancipation through lived experiences. It was noted in the first chapter that Booth argues for a leap of the 'empathetic imagination' in order to create a new reality of global citizens (Booth, 2007, p. 460). Any attempt to understand insecurity as lived experience, such as this chapter, also requires such a leap.

This chapter is important in setting out the context for further chapters, and it will seek to present a narrative of violent disjuncture with the past, followed by the imposition of a peace settlement. It proceeds in three parts. The first section will outline Vukovar before the outbreak of war in 1991. The second will use primary and secondary material to paint a picture of what happened in Vukovar from late 1991. The third will describe the period from late 1991 onwards and outlines the nature of the peace settlement which was agreed in late 1995 and which permitted a form of finality. Subsequent chapters will problematise the nature of this settlement in a Boothian move to switch the subject of security from the state to the individual.

The focus here, then, is partly on constructing a narrative of events which will help to inform subsequent chapters, but it is also the beginning of the engagement with the insecure other – the equivalent of Booth's reading about political prisoners through his involvement with Amnesty International. Attempting to understand how the experience of insecurity *played out* in Vukovar is therefore the explicit focus of the chapter. A large number of firsthand accounts and secondary analyses of Vukovar have been published in Croatian; one sourcebook produced by Vukovar library lists over seven hundred such items (Gradska knjižnica Vukovar, 2006). This chapter makes use of available sources published in English. This includes a large collection of primary documents translated from Croatian and not widely available outside the country, entitled *Hrvatsko Ratno Pismo 1991/92*, or

*Croatian War Writing 1991/92*, which the author was able to access at the public library in Vukovar (Oraić-Tolić, 1992).

*Peace and Prosperity: Vukovar pre-1991*

Vukovar is a city with a long history located on the Danube River in eastern Croatia, in an area known as eastern Slavonia, and bordering Serbia. One of the most important archaeological sites in Europe, Vučedol, is located a few kilometres away and dates back to 6000 BC. The settlement was culturally active and produced ceramic objects, as visitors can see for themselves in the city museum. One of these, a ceramic dove from 3000 BC, which was found in 1938, now appears as an image on banknotes and advertising boards, and cheap wooden replicas can be brought from souvenir shops in Vukovar and throughout eastern Slavonia. Other discoveries include the Vučedol Orion, said to be Europe's oldest calendar, as well as other ceramic artefacts.

Since those ancient times a number of ethnic groups have passed through or settled in Vukovar and the surrounding area. The River Danube and an abundance of farmland have made the region an attractive place to settle, with Romans and, in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, Slavic peoples migrating there. By the 12<sup>th</sup> century Hungary had grown into a significant power in the region and for the next eight centuries Croatia was ruled as part of the kingdom of Hungary (Habsburgs from 1527). In the northern part of the country, including Vukovar, the Hungarian architecture and administrative systems were adopted and the term 'Slavonia' – land of Slavs – used more frequently. This did not stop Vukovar becoming a Muslim market city following the 16<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman invasion. The Ottomans were eventually driven out and many travelled south to Bosnia where they would settle.





Image A: Postcard of Vukovar, with River Danube in the foreground, early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Habsburg Empress Maria Theresa settled other ethnic groups in Vukovar and the surrounding region. Germans formed a substantial minority among the Slavs. There were also Slovaks, Ruthenians, Jews, Hungarians and Albanians.



Image B: Postcard of Vukovar, the Grand Hotel, early 20<sup>th</sup> century.





Image C: Postcard of Vukovar, Eltz Manor, early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

These developments made Vukovar and the region of eastern Slavonia one of the most ethnically diverse places in Europe by the twentieth century. Even the Second World War, which saw horrifically violent clashes between the Nazi backed ‘Ustashe’ regime of Ante Pavelić and Josip Broz Tito’s Partisans, did not impact greatly upon this diversity. Indeed, Vukovar had been one of the more peaceful regions during the Second World War (Glenny, 1993, p. 80). Small wonder that the idea of Yugoslavia, meaning ‘Land of the South Slavs’, was well received in Vukovar.





Image D: Shopping in Vukovar, c. 1980. Courtesy of Charles Tauber.

By 1991 Vukovar was a truly multi-cultural city. The population stretched to 50,000, not including the nearby villages, with 43% Croat, 37% Serb and 20% 'others' including Hungarians, Ruthenians and Slovaks among others (Magaš, 1993, p. 356). People were aware of these differences because of different churches supporting Catholic and Orthodox communities, linguistic variations and certain areas of the city sometimes housing particular ethnicities. Ethnic differences were not morally important at that time, indeed, for many such differences did not matter at all. More Serb and Montenegrin immigrants had moved to the villages between Osijek and Vukovar, and also to the suburbs of Vukovar, after the Second World War (Bennett, 1995, p. 62). Vukovar subsequently had one of the highest percentages of mixed marriages in the whole of Yugoslavia, with 34% of all marriages being between partners of different ethnic backgrounds compared with 28% in cosmopolitan Sarajevo (Allcock, 2000, p. 376). No ethnic conflicts had ever been recorded in Vukovar (Stevanovic, 2004, p. 70). Communists, not nationalists, had been elected in the 1990 local elections in Vukovar, a city which 'had never been a centre of Croat nationalism' (Tanner, 1997, p. 244).





Image E: Central Vukovar, view towards the Workers' Club from park. Courtesy of Charles Tauber.

This may have been because Vukovar was an economically prosperous city. The economy in Vukovar was based on trade, viticulture, farming and livestock breeding. Tourism also played a part, as surviving postcards portraying an attractive city on the Danube addressed to bourgeois households in Vienna suggest. During the Yugoslavian period, however, the heartbeat of the city had been provided by the shoe factory in the suburb of Borovo which had employed much of the city and produced footwear for the rest of the country.

### *Violent Disjuncture: Vukovar 1991*

It might be said therefore that Vukovar, for the reasons outlined above, was by the end of the twentieth century a city characterised by various forms of security for the citizens who lived there. It is at this point in the thesis that the notion of the international in the local, introduced at the beginning of the thesis, begins to find purchase. By the middle of 1991 the future of Yugoslavia as a whole was looking uncertain. A decade had passed since the death of Broz Josip Tito, a Second World War hero and the leader of post-war Yugoslavia. Nationalist rhetoric from Serbia,



one of six constituent republics in the federation along with Croatia, Bosnia, Montenegro, Macedonia and Slovenia, had stirred up tensions throughout the country during the 1980s. There is a substantial literature on the fragmentation of Yugoslavia into its constitutive parts and considerable debate surrounding the causes and consequences of the wars which accompanied that process (for example Bennett, 1995; Campbell, 1998; Cohen, 1995; Denitch, 1994; Glenny, 1992, 1999; Ramet, 1999; Schopflin, 1993; Stitkovac, 2000; Woodward, 1995).

This thesis is not concerned with contributing to the literature on what caused the conflict in the first instance; it is more concerned with the consequences of the violence upon social and political relationships in Vukovar – the international in the local. 1991 represents a severe break with the past life of the city described in the first section. The multicultural and prosperous city was transformed by a wider regional conflict into a shell of its former self, and with its destruction came new symbolic meanings.

Although Vukovar lay on the border with Serbia the situation there remained relatively quiet until the May that year. As a result of local ethnic tensions the Police Chief was murdered, which acted as a catalyst for further violence. Two policemen were kidnapped in Borovo Selo on May 1. On May 2 a busload of their colleagues, many young and inexperienced, were sent to rescue them. Serbs ambushed the bus and fifteen policemen were killed. Rumours that the bodies had been mutilated spread throughout Croatia; the Croatian representative on the federal presidency said they had been decapitated. The Borovo Selo massacre also gave the Yugoslavian army a reason to move closer to Vukovar in order to 'keep the peace', virtually cutting off the city from the rest of Croatia (Tanner, 1997, pp. 244-7). The

multiethnic composition of the city, however, made it more difficult for Serbia to stir up ethnic tension. Furthermore, the balance of casualties caused by the Borovo Selo massacre made the Belgrade narrative of protecting vulnerable Serbs difficult, although this did not stop Serbia making that argument (Almond, 1994, p. 217).

Serbian propaganda claimed that there was once a Serbian majority in Vukovar and that Serbia had a historical right to the city. Croatian propaganda claimed the opposite. Belgrade replied by arguing that the borders between Croatia and Serbia were 'unnatural' and had been imposed by Tito to the detriment of Serbs (Stevanovic, 2004, p. 69-70).

July and August 1991 have been characterised by one scholar as 'a form of low-casualty shadow boxing' in eastern Slavonia (Almond, 1994, p. 217). During that time Serbia asserted itself by forcing out Croatian policemen in key areas, as well as taking control of important supply points along the Danube, although Serb politicians remained wary of European responses to their implied aggression (Almond, 1994, p. 220). The Mayor of Vukovar, Slavko Dokmanovic, was a Serb and fearing for his life had left the city before the situation worsened. Indeed, by late August only 15,000 of the 50,000 who had lived in the city remained. Those who stayed in Vukovar retained the ethnic mix that had always characterised the city (Silber and Little, 1996, p. 176).

On August 20 the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) base in Vukovar was blockaded by Croatian territorial defence units, reinforced by Croatian paramilitaries. In retaliation the JNA began to build up its forces around the city. Some commentators in Croatia called for a UN intervention to prevent Serbian aggression at this time, but to no avail (Denitch, 1997, p. 233). On September 24,

390 trucks carrying JNA reservists, 400 tanks and 280 other vehicles moved in on Vukovar. 6 days later, on September 30, Operation Vukovar began by air and land (Sikavica, 2000, p. 144).

The city faced a heavy onslaught from the JNA/paramilitary forces and Croatian forces were outnumbered by between thirty and fifty to one (Sikavica, 2000, p. 144). The main method of attack, the siege by means of artillery, would become one of the key characteristic features of the Balkan wars of the 1990s, as Sarajevo would later witness (Allcock, 2000, p. 408). The Serbs avoided close combat and relied instead upon a slow battering of the city with canon and mortar (Almond, 1994, p. 226). In September journalists were still able to get in and out of Vukovar. By the end of October hardly a building had been left intact. Croat forces were only able to get supplies into the city across the cornfields by night (Glenny, 1993, p. 160). One eyewitness recorded the following on October 18:

'An artillery attack on the city centre is taking place at this very moment. I dare not imagine the situation on the outskirts of the city. The war being waged here is meant to continue until extermination. Genocide. The fire is so intense that sometimes the dead lie in the streets for days. The infrastructure of the city has been completely devastated.

'NOTHING HAS BEEN IMAGINED OR ADDED IN THE REPORTS WE ARE SENDING. MOREOVER, THERE ARE NO WORDS THAT CAN ADEQUATELY DESCRIBE THE SITUATION AND THE PLIGHT OF THE PEOPLE IN THIS CITY' (Oraić-Tolić, 1992, p. 366).

The experience of witnessing the bombardment of Vukovar as it unfolded was clearly too shocking to be described in full by this contemporary. It is important to reflect on this matter briefly because it suggests that the emphasis placed on voice by scholars such as Linklater and upheld by this thesis has limits. The opening chapter made the point that the Welsh School has suffered from an absence of voice and that this should be rectified. The second chapter argued that one way of achieving this



would be to adopt an approach to the security as emancipation move which embraces the discourse ethic much more vigorously.

Yet in the passage above, which details the experience of insecurity as recorded by a witness, the crisis of war seen through the eyes of one individual causes a crisis of expression also. When words fail, the role of dialogue has to be challenged, because in such instances it is silence rather than expression which assumes greater political significance. The opening chapter also discussed Booth's claim that the world had to orientate political action towards a set of oncoming crises, and that dialogue would be central to this.

The extract above presents an alternative understanding of the relationship between crisis and dialogue. Booth sees dialogue as a response to future crises. Yet crisis can silence dialogue. The danger for Booth's model then is that if many forms of crisis exist in world politics their cumulative impact may well be to hinder attempts which seek to entrench dialogue as a norm. The point here, which is enforced by this account of insecurity as lived experience, is to understand that expression and therefore discourse ethics has limits, which makes the application of the discourse ethic to questions about security inherently problematic. This is a challenge that scholars sympathetic to the security as emancipation move must consider, rather than a permanent stumbling block.

The silence of some contemporaries was one reaction to the violence; resistance was another. The land war in Vukovar proved unexpectedly difficult for the JNA and Serbian paramilitary forces, who had not anticipated the rise of a force of at least 1000 fighters led by Mile Dedaković (Tanner, 1997, p. 256). One estimate puts the figure at 5000 fighters (Almond, 1994, p. 225). The Croatian National

Guard and the civilian defence force – who became known as the ‘Defenders of Vukovar’ – were joined by Croatian paramilitary groups such as Hos, short for Hrvatske Obrambene Snage or the Croatian Defence Force (Tanner, 1997, p. 265). Hos sided with the Croatian forces in Vukovar and used the media to broadcast complaints against the Croat government that Vukovar was being starved of weapons (Tanner, 1997, p. 266). Ethnic Croats also came from Bosnia to fight in Vukovar (Bennett, 1995, p. 185). A crisis headquarters was set up in the hospital basement, where most of the sick and wounded were being treated (Silber and Little, 1996, p. 173). The civilian population of the city were not evacuated (Sikavica, 2000, p. 144). As the battle intensified those who had not already fled were forced underground to their cellars and shelters. One Croatian fighter provides a picture of what life was like in Vukovar for the ‘Defenders’:

‘I wanted to go on describing what it is like here, but I have given up because there are no words to describe the despair, the sorrow and the madness going on around me... We have all died as people. When I say people I mean the layer of habits and civilisation which we all put on during our lives over the nakedness we were born with. All this has died in this city. We kill and are killed. The roots of our existence are being cut away...I hate you because you have bathrooms and your children go to school and you watch television and the only thing we still need is for you to let us die in peace without pomp and circumstance’. (Oraić-Tolić, 1992 p. 377.)

The letter was written by an unknown Croatian soldier, sent at 8.56 pm on the October 23 1991. The author was killed the following morning. It is useful here to recall Elshtain’s critique of Linklater, referred to in the previous chapter, which stated that Linklater did not engage with the Hobbesian world of suffering. In this extract that world confronts the reader directly. Once again there is a failure of expression to describe the setting of war. It is important to note this because the experience of great suffering in Vukovar conditioned the emancipatory practices to be discussed in subsequent chapters.



Other contemporaries at this time were able to hold out for help. The following appeal was entitled 'Give Vukovar a Chance! Two Thousand Children Living Underground', and was sent anonymously by email in late October 1991:

'What would be the reaction of Europe, if somewhere in the West someone rounded up two thousand children (from newborn babies to high school youngsters) and shut them up underground, threatened by death the instant they came for a breath of fresh air, getting just one warm (and very frugal) meal a day – not knowing how long this condition would continue? Is there anyone in Berlin, Vienna, London, Paris, Washington who can picture this?'

'Some of you are thousands of kilometres away, but shouldn't your hearts be closer? We want negotiators to come now. We cannot imagine anyone who, seeing the war faces of our children, could find one single justification for this war! Vukovar is not just an agglomeration of buildings, it is a living, breathing organism. Vukovar has a bloodstream, it has a life which is threatened. This message is addressed to all those who respect life. To all those to whom the joyous laughter of a child means something. To all those who care.

**STOP THE WAR IN CROATIA! GIVE VUKOVAR A CHANCE!' (Oraić-Tolić, 1992, pp. 392-3).**

In this way the international played out in the locality of Vukovar. The outside world impacted upon the city in this way, but in keeping with the assertion raised in the introduction to this thesis that the local and the international constitute one another, the local impacted upon the international also. As the battle grew Vukovar became hugely symbolic for Croats and Serbs (Tanner, 1997, p. 256). To Croatia, Vukovar became their 'Stalingrad', as described by the Croatian representative on the federal presidency (Silber and Little, 1996, p. 176). Military historians would later declare this to be an accurate depiction (Sadkovich, 2006, p. 191).

The following sources provide some indication of how contemporaries reacted. Tanja Tarbarina, a Zagreb based columnist, wrote the following on 31 October 1991:

'I wonder who you are sleeping with. I am sleeping with Vukovar. It wakes me up. Everybody there is a God to me and I believe in him. And each precious house is a church to me. Each kitchen table an altar. Each cow a sacred cow. Each meadow the most beautiful painting. And I don't care from

which century. And whether it has been catalogued in books. It will be catalogued in me'. (*Globus*, 31 October, 1991, cited in Oraić-Tolić, 1992, p. 393).

Another contemporary wrote simply,

'And whether we like it or not, today's Guernica is called Vukovar'.

(Annie Le Brun, Paris, from 'Today's Guernica is called Vukovar', *Merceder*, 13 November, 1991, cited in Oraić-Tolić, 1992, p. 432).

A French journalist Yves Debay, who had befriended a child in the city, was humbled by what he saw in Vukovar as local people struggled to defend themselves.

His descriptions also reveal the complexity of civil war:

'One day, Marko asked me to take him home to get some fresh ammunition. A typical adolescents' room with posters of rock stars and a little pennant of the local soccer team next to a picture of a Harley Davidson. Under his bed there was a box full of bullets for his Kalashnikov. Marko was sitting on his bed changing his magazines when another youngster in civilian clothes appeared in the doorstep. They hugged and joked for some 10 minutes. Marko showed him his gun. While returning I asked Marko how come his friend was in civilian clothing and not in camouflage uniform like the rest of his peers.

Marko answered, 'He's a Serb'.

('I haven't seen such a battle anywhere', *Figaro Magazine*, Yves Debay, 7 December, 1991, cited in Oraić-Tolić, 1992, p. 482).

It is micro-interactions such as these that reveal a key characteristic of ethnic conflict – that it is as much a political exchange between the familiar as it is between the radically different. An approach which seeks to understand the security as emancipation move through actual experiences of insecurity and security would embrace such accounts, revealing as they do a human quality to macro political developments. A local radio journalist, Siniša Glavašević, broadcast updates from Vukovar throughout the siege until the city fell. Below is one such report, broadcast during the siege but published after Vukovar had already fallen, which continues the theme:



**'Who will look after my city, my friends, who will rescue Vukovar from darkness? There are no shoulders stronger than mine and yours; therefore, if you do not find it too hard, if something is left of the whispers you heard in your youth, please join us. Someone has touched our parks, the benches with your names still carved in the wood, the shadows where you gave and received your first kiss – someone has stolen it all, for how can one explain the fact that even the shadow has disappeared? The shop-window where you admired the reflections of your own delight is gone, the cinema where you used to watch the saddest of films is gone, your past has been simply destroyed and now you have nothing.'**

**Yet Glavašević finds some hope despite the destruction of place and memory he saw before him:**

**'You must start building from scratch. First your past, looking for your roots, then your present, and if there is still any energy left, invest it in the future. And so not stay alone in the future. As to the city, do not worry, it has been inside you all the time. Only hidden. So that the executioner cannot find it.**

**The city – that's you!' (Oraić-Tolić, 1992, p. 452).**

**If the international is being played out in the local, it is also taking something precious away from the individual. Loss has been a constant theme running through this chapter, but the extract above explicitly lays bare that which is taken from the physical structure of the locality. What is also important to take from this extract is the identification of the self as a site of resistance against what is termed here as 'the executioner', but which is really a reference to war in general. This theme will be developed throughout the thesis but particularly in chapter 8. The final line, revealing the city to be the people, is vitally important in asserting an understanding of how the city changed during the post-war, to be discussed in the next two chapters. As the people changed, so did the city, and in ways that were not easily contained within the settlement that some attempted to build.**

**Those changes were due to the extraordinary experiences of insecurity endured by the people of the city in late 1991. In November that year Dr Vesna Bosanac, the Director of Vukovar Hospital, sent the following appeal:**

'Vukovar is undergoing a particularly severe attack. The enemy is attacking intensively with bombers, tanks, rocket launchers, as well as heavy-calibre machine guns. Yesterday (2<sup>nd</sup> November 1991) the hospital admitted 87 new wounded, and 18 new wounded were admitted this morning (3 November 1991), so that the number of wounded, consisting mostly of civilians, including large numbers of woman and children, has now risen to 350. The situation is critical in the extreme; stocks of medicines are running out.

In desperation, we appeal for help to all those who can help us while it is not too late'. (Oraić-Tolić, 1992, p. 410).

By mid-November Vukovar had been levelled, street by street, house by house (Glenny, 1993, p. 123). On 17 November the remaining fighters surrendered. Elderly civilians were permitted to leave the city, carrying whatever possessions they could. Others were less fortunate. On 18 November, the Red Cross were expelled from Vukovar hospital by the Yugoslav army. All but 60 of the 420 patients, many injured, as well as a number of hospital staff, were taken from the city to Ovcara, a farm some 6km away, killed and buried in a mass grave (Tanner, 1997, p. 267).

The newly formed Croatian Medical Journal would play a vital role in recording the testimonies of those who survived the ordeal suffered by Vukovar hospital (Marušić *et al*, 2002, p. 1). The graves would later be discovered and the process of identifying the bodies remains an essential component of the 'post-war' (Stover and Peress, 1998). The UN Security Council would demand that Yugoslavia transfer the suspected war criminals to The Hague (UNSCR 1207, 1998). The UN war crimes tribunal later convicted two former Yugoslavian Army officers for the crime. Mile Mrksic was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment for murder and torture, while Veselin Sljivancanin was sentenced to five years' imprisonment for torture, but was acquitted on charges of extermination (BBC News, online resource, 2007).

Croatian Prime Minister Ivo Sanader would express his disappointment with the UN for what many Croats considered to be lenient sentences (Southeast



European Times, 2007a). Speaking at the UN General Assembly he said that the sentence were ‘a mockery of post-conflict justice’ and that Croatia ‘feels hurt’ by the verdict. In return, the president of the UN war crimes tribunal accused Croatia of applying pressure to the court (Southeast European Times, 2007b). In this way Booth’s ‘human wrongs’ become part of the marketplace of international political behaviour (Booth, 1995). Acts of political violence create acts of political mourning.



Image F: Houses in Vukovar, 1991. Courtesy of Charles Tauber.

Vukovar now lay under the control of the Serb dominated Yugoslav army. Of the 13,700 people reported ‘missing’ during the 1991-95 war, Vukovar accounted for 2,642 of them. 2,300 people died during the siege and thousands more were wounded. When the survivors were forced out of their shelters they found their city destroyed. Vukovar had become a ghost city (Štitkovac, 2000, p. 164-5). One scholar described the siege as ‘one of the most merciless bombardments of modern history (Glenny, 1993, p. 19).





Image G: Central Vukovar, 1991. Courtesy of Charles Tauber.

The fall of Vukovar was a spectacular loss for Croatia and the worst case of destruction in Europe since 1945 (Thompson, 1994, p. 164). The symbolic importance of Vukovar for the Croatian side had been strengthened by Croatian commanders in the city refusing television access because they feared the Serbs would be able to gain information that might aid their attack. Few Croatian media outlets discussed the multi-ethnic composition of the city; Vukovar was presented as a pure Croatian martyr (Thompson, 1994, p. 165). Vukovar became a symbol of their own suffering (Bennett, 1995, p. 168). One observer noted,

'A shot up statue of Christ on a demolished building in Vukovar testifies to the suffering of the Croatian nation'.

(*Večernji List*, 24 November, 1991, cited in Oraić-Tolić, 1992, p. 46).

Television pictures emerged once the city had fallen. For western audiences, the images of long lines of dishevelled civilians carry their few possessions to an unknown destination showed that the battle of Vukovar had not just been about military strategy, it was also about ethnic cleansing (Almond, 1994, p. 226).





Image H: Central Vukovar, 1991. Courtesy of Charles Tauber.

In Serbia, images of Vukovar after it had fallen were broadcast along with commentary describing the city as ‘liberated’ (Milošević, 2000, p. 120). Vukovar had been described in Serbia as ‘the backbone of the Croatian army’ and even as a base for ‘German military penetration down the Danube’. Soldiers from the Yugoslavian National Army (JNA) returned to Belgrade as heroes, and soldiers were decorated accordingly (Sikavica, 2000, p. 144-5). Some Serbian writers and artists aided the Belgrade propaganda machine; one well known artist, Milic Stankovic, portrayed a Serbian woman whose baby had been cut from her womb by her Croatian husband to prevent the birth of a half-breed. (Stevanovic, 2004, p. 72).

Some Serbian soldiers who had experienced combat in Vukovar, however, were disillusioned with their war efforts and questioned whether or not the sacrifice had been worth it. Some Serbs were unsure as to why they had been fighting in Vukovar at all, especially when there was no national consensus, clear aim or moral justification (Denitch, 1997, p. 192). Indeed, Misha Glenny has argued that the destruction of Vukovar occurred for no apparent purpose (Glenny, 1993, p. 115). As the siege went on Serbian reservists had been called up, many of whom refused to



fight and returned home to organize anti-war demonstrations (Judah, 1997, p. 185; Stevanovic, 2004, p. 70). Desertion, particularly among non-Serb soldiers in the JNA was high and many disobeyed orders (Silber and Little, 1996, p. 177). Not all Serbs, then, joined in with the nationalist celebrations.

It is hard to obtain definitive figures to determine the numbers of those killed in Vukovar in 1991, however, it is certain that a high number of people, many civilians, of Croat, Serb or another ethnic background, were killed along with a number of soldiers, many of whom were young and untrained (Sikavica, 2000, p. 144). Silber and Little provide some figures which help present a picture of the impact of the three-month long siege. The hospital treated 1,850 wounded people, mostly civilians but not including those with light wounds who were advised to shelter at home. Vukovar police registered 520 dead bodies for transportation to the one available burial ground, of whom 156 were Croatian national guardsmen, 24 policemen, and the rest civilians, including 8 children.



Image I: Hotel Dunav, 1991. Courtesy of Charles Tauber.

Those numbers do not include the hundreds of bodies that could not be collected as the bombardment became more severe. One aid convoy was received in Vukovar



carrying medicine and which evacuated 114 of the wounded (Silber and Little, 1996, p. 181).



Image J: Central Vukovar, 1991. Courtesy of Charles Tauber.

Some saw the destruction of Vukovar - followed soon after with the declaration of a ceasefire brokered by Lord Carrington - as evidence of the inadequacy, or even of the complicity, of the international response (Magaš, 1993, p. 356). The siege of Vukovar made headlines around the world and caused many to bemoan the idea of a unified Slavic state which Yugoslavia had stood for (Bennett, 1995, p. 6). Yet no international action followed.

By the end of 1991 the thoughts of some had turned to justice. This poem was originally told to a Zagreb based writer, Antun Šiljan, by 'an uneducated, simple man from Vukovar, a Croat of remote Moslem descent'. Although the man did not realise it, Šiljan noticed that chanting and rhythmic nature of the oral delivery was in the style of a form of Croatian poetry from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, written using Arabic script. Writing up the poem for publication, Šiljan entitled it *The Vukovar Arzuhal*, or *The Vukovar Memorandum*, a reference to the so called Memorandum of



the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences written in 1986 which had advocated the notion of a Greater Serbia, fueling and legitimating Milosevic's nationalist policies.:

I am a peaceloving man  
and besides a bit too old,  
but I'm telling you, gentlemen,  
you'll pay for Vukovar.

You've pounded down the whole city,  
you've done tremendous harm,  
that's why I tell you gentlemen,  
you'll pay for Vukovar.

That in my own house a guest  
wants to be master -  
it is not right, gentlemen,  
you'll pay for Vukovar.

What you wanted, it was evil  
and it'll never come to pass -  
remember what I tell you gentlemen,  
you'll pay for Vukovar.

The Danube will flow for a long time,  
everything shall be paid for -  
I warrant you gentlemen,  
You'll pay for Vukovar.

(*Večernji List*, 1 December, 1991, cited in Oraić-Tolić, 1992, p. 474).

### *Closure and Settlement: Vukovar post-1991*

The previous chapters have discussed the need for understanding the security as emancipation move through lived experiences. The section above has introduced an empirical setting of insecurity in Vukovar using a number of secondary sources but which also engages with firsthand accounts that portray insecurity through



experience. A number of different responses to that insecurity emerged over time. One response was to move the macro political situation towards closure and settlement – towards security at the level of the state.

Vukovar remained under Serbian control from November 1991 until the end of the war in 1995. After 1991, eastern Slavonia was home to 95,000 Serb refugees from other parts of Croatia, out of a total population of 160,000. GNP fell to 12% of what it had been in 1990, and Vukovar ground almost to a standstill. As well as the thriving factory in Borovo, Vukovar had also been the largest transport harbour city on the Danube. Years after 1991, however, rusting cranes dotted the river bank. Only the Dunav Hotel, the hospital, police station, city hall and a handful of cafes were repaired. A private crematorium was opened, and a tourist agency began offering trips to the ‘liberated Serbian Vukovar’, an offer many from Serbia took up (Stevanovic, 2004, p. 73).

Into the surviving houses of Croats who had been killed or who had left moved refugee Serbs from eastern Croatia who had been expelled by Croatian forces. A year after the ‘liberation’ of Vukovar by Serbia, these people were still pushing wheelbarrows around the city looking for anything in the rubble they might use to get by (Štitkovac, 2000, p. 165-6). The movement of people and the scarcity of resources would prove to be ongoing challenges for the city, as subsequent chapters discuss.

During the 1995 Dayton Agreements, which brought an end to the conflict, Vukovar became a key talking point between Tudjman and Milosevic. Although Croatian troops had regained many of the areas that had been under Serbian control in Operation Flash and Operation Storm in 1995, Sector East, including Vukovar,

still lay under Serbian command. Tudjman could easily have pushed into Sector East through the UN ceasefire lines, as by this point Croatia had built a strong military presence, yet the possibility of re-igniting the war in Sector East remained and so Tudjman sought a deal with Milosevic, who was also in favour of a deal over Sector East, encouraged by the prospect of sanctions against Serbian being lifted if he cooperated in the talks. Just as they had reached a deal over how Bosnia should be distributed between Croatia and Serbia in early 1991, Tudjman and Milosevic reached a deal over Sector East. The area would return to Croatia following a two year period of UN administration, and the human rights of Serbs who wished to remain part of Croatia would be secured. Sector East thus returned to Croatia without a single gunshot (LeBor, 2003, pp. 252-3).

The Erdut Agreement which formally set out the deal between Tudjman and Milosevic was signed on November 12 1995 and established that a UN transitional force would oversee the process of returning Sector East to Croatia. The settlement ensured the demilitarisation of the region, the return of refugees, the reestablishment of public services, including a police force which was to gain the confidence of all ethnic groups, the protection of human rights, the right to freely return to places of residence and to compensation for lost property.

The agreement did not calm the fears of all those living in Sector East though. After 1995, Serb refugees living in Vukovar braced themselves for a speedy departure, transporting belongings across the border to Serbia and storing them with friends (Udovički, 2000, p. 288). The conduct of Croatian troops in other parts of Croatia and in Bosnia during the war, which had seen thousands of Serbian civilians forcibly displaced, resulted in Croatia losing much of the international sympathy that had arisen following the fall of Vukovar (Denitch, 1997, p. 192). The notion of



Vukovar returning to Croatia was therefore not appealing to some Serbs who had heard of how Croatian soldiers had treated Serbian civilians in other parts of the country.

Once the agreement was signed the UN Security Council authorised the United Nations Transitional Administration in Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES) to be deployed on 15 January 1996 with the American Jacques Paul Klein as Transitional Administrator and consisting of 4,849 troops, 99 military observers and 401 civilian police. The headquarters of the mission was to be Vukovar itself. The terms of the Erdut Agreement were put into place; the region was demilitarised and local elections were called for April 1997, with the newly former Independent Democratic Serb Party (SDSS) winning 11 of the 28 municipalities. Although the United Nations did raise concerns regarding the bureaucratic loopholes Serb families had to jump through to get documentation, as well as arbitrary arrests of Serbs, the demilitarisation of the region, the elections and the exhumation of the Ovchara grave site led the UN to state 'reintegration was peaceful' and that UNTAES provided a 'positive precedent for peace throughout the former Yugoslavia'. Having accomplished its key objective of 'peacefully reintegrating' Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium into Croatia, and entrusting the protection of human rights for all citizens to the government of Croatia, UNTAES concluded its mandate on 15 January 1998 (UN, online resource, 2008).

Jacques Paul Klein, the head of the UN mission in eastern Croatia, regarded the operation as exemplary (Klein, 1997). Scholars who followed the process noted that, although minority rights would have to continue to be protected, 'the example of UNTAES and Eastern Slavonia (the region in which Vukovar is located) can

rightfully serve as a model for future peacebuilding endeavours' (Bloom and Sondorp, 2006, p. 126. See also Šimunović, 1999).

Updated versions of the Croatian constitution which had originally been drafted in 1990 proclaimed that

'as basic provisions for peace and stability of the international order, the Republic of Croatia is established as the national state of the Croatian nation and the state of members of autochthonous national minorities: Serbs, Czechs, Slovaks, Italians, Hungarians, Jews, Germans, Austrians, Ukrainians and Ruthenians and the others who are citizens, and who are guaranteed equality with citizens of Croatian nationality and realisation of national rights in accordance with the democratic norms of the United Nations Organisation and the countries of the free world' (ICL, online resource, 2004).

The acceptance by Europe of the new Croatian state is significant because it shows the extent to which the Croatian state is seen as 'secure' and 'stable'. Late 1991 saw the destruction of the city, but by 1998 a peace settlement had been put in place with the support of the United Nations. Under a new constitution, human rights were guaranteed for all citizens regardless of ethnicity. Observers have noted that Croatia developed no strategy for post-war peacebuilding (Škrabalo, 2003). This is presumably because policy-makers saw no reason for such a programme, given the assumption that settlement had been achieved.

The process of Croatia joining the European Union was set in motion, with membership looking increasingly likely. The Prime Minister of Croatia, Ivo Sanader, wrote that 'Croatia in the twenty-first century sees itself firmly anchored in the Euro-Atlantic community' (Sanader, 2005, p. 10). Croatia's journey towards post-Westphalian European society seems inevitable. In these ways a form of settlement has been reached. Supporters of that settlement, such as Sanader, argue it allows Croatia to pursue a political, social and cultural future characterised by the promise of Europe.



## *Conclusion*

The chapter had attempted to show the impact of the war in the former Yugoslavia in Vukovar, and as such it has painted a picture of a peaceful city, drawn not only into conflict but into an extreme rupture with its past, before arriving at a form of settlement. The following two chapters seek to show the partial nature of that settlement, a partiality which manifests itself in the architecture of remembrance and through human relationships. The void created in the gap between the formal settlement of the war and its partial nature is the space in which NGOs operate.

What is striking about the narrative of events presented in this chapter is how the international can be seen in the local. The discipline of International Relations has not always been well suited to focusing on the micro, and Linklater's work is one important example of this tendency. As the thesis progresses this theme will be developed further. This chapter has also sought to introduce the voices of those who were there to witness the destruction of Vukovar as a means of portraying what happened in the city, and also as a way of constructing an academic argument which also has form and feeling. In such a way the gap between the act of study and the subject of study, discussed in the thesis introduction, is made real.

It has been noted that silence was often a response to the crisis of war when expression failed, and that is a challenge for any approach to security as emancipation which embraces discourse ethics. Chapter 1 highlighted the fact that Booth seeks to orientate the security as emancipation move towards future crises. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 take a different approach, orientating such reflections towards the emancipatory processes that followed crisis discussed in this chapter.

This chapter portrays a city drawn into war, transformed by the conflict and then enveloped in a formal peace settlement. The following chapter seeks to problematise this settlement by discussing forms of memorialisation in Vukovar which suggest the imposition of a mono-ethnic understanding of the war. The implication of this is that the settlement in Vukovar is more ambiguous and problematic than the settlement itself implies. It may well be the case that the violence of the war continues and that the aims of the war are being enshrined – in this sense the totalising project – a marriage of territoriality, sovereignty, citizenship and nationalism – can be seen. This suggests that Linklater's emphasis on the significance of entrenching dialogic norms within institutions could overlook important aspects of emancipation as practice. Croatian institutions reflect emancipatory principles, yet the institutional settlement may mask continuing forms of violence. The following chapter explores the partial nature of the settlement. The thesis claims that security and emancipation must be understood through lived experiences. This chapter and subsequent chapters seek to explore that proposition.



## **Chapter 4**

### **A Partial Settlement I: Memorialisation and Reconstruction**

#### *Introduction*

The previous chapter detailed the transition from insecurity to security in Vukovar. Yet in important ways the post-war peace can be seen as only a partial settlement. Understanding emancipation through lived experiences reveals this partiality and challenges the state-centric notion of Croatia having achieved post-war security through the implementation of a peace settlement. This chapter seeks to take the reader into the city as it stands in the present and as it is experienced by those who live there. As such it develops the theme, explored in the previous chapter, of understanding security as emancipation through lived experiences. It explores the physical architecture of memorials to the dead and of the reconstructed city itself, taking into consideration flags, posters and graffiti. By doing so the chapter suggests that the processes of memorialisation and reconstruction uphold an ethnically-particularist understanding of the war in Croatia, which tells a story of Croatian sacrifice, Croatian heroism and Croatian victory.

This particularist understanding of the war runs contrary to the fact that suffering throughout Croatia and in Vukovar especially was experienced by all ethnic groups, and that remembering the war in this way risks undermining the sensitivity to other ethnic groups which the constitution is supposed to uphold. The partial nature of the settlement therefore becomes clearer when the particularist nature of memorialisation and reconstruction is taken into account. As subsequent chapters will explore one implication of this partiality is that citizens have created alternative public spaces in which this dominant, state-sanctioned, particularist

understanding of the war can be challenged. The task here then is to outline how this particularist understanding of the war is now projected through the city.

The work of Jenny Edkins is useful for this task, and the first section outlines how this is so. It is significant that Edkins informs this chapter because such an approach helps to overcome what was identified in chapter 1 as a key weakness of the Welsh School, that it had turned the security as emancipation move away from compatibility towards an emphasis on the differences between approaches to understanding security. The remainder of the chapter investigates the projection of the pro-Croatian ethnically particularist view of the war throughout the city in light of her work. The final section of the chapter relates these discussions to the previous chapter in order to affirm the partiality of the settlement.

### *Trauma Time and Memory*

The arguments made in this chapter go beyond the realm of the Welsh School and of Linklater. The work of Jenny Edkins in *Trauma and the Memory of Politics* (2003) is useful for helping scholars understand how traumatic memories are captured by public spaces and the political implications of this.

Edkins argues that there is a difference between the 'normal', linear understanding of time favoured by the state, and what she terms 'trauma time'. Trauma time arises when something happens which disrupts linear time, when events 'upset, or escape, the straightforward linear temporality associated with the regularity of so-called 'politics' and appear to occupy another form of time' (Edkins, 2003, p. xiv). The everyday political process operates within the linear notion of time in which events are part of a well known narrative; events are often put into the story in advance. In trauma time, however, there is a disruption to this linearity



because something happens which is totally unexpected, something which does not fit into the narrative, compelling agents to construct a new account of what happened so as to make it meaningful.

Edkins argues that when a traumatic event has occurred there is a competition to define what has happened, to provide that which has broken the linear temporality with meaning. In Vukovar, it is possible to see how the state has succeeded in providing meaning to the traumatic events which consumed the city in 1991 and the period afterwards. For this meaning to take hold however, the art of verbal communication is again put aside, for the meaning of the war is projected as much through silence as in words. The way in which Vukovar has been rebuilt impacts upon the social functioning of the peace settlement because public space serves to uphold a particular understanding of the war in Croatia. A tour of important memorial sites in Vukovar which also takes into account a number of other symbolic displays such as graffiti, flags and posters reveals a narrative of the war in Vukovar which makes the events of 1991 described in the previous chapter meaningful.

Because of the ambiguity involved in the relationship between the state and the production of trauma time, which poses the danger of the state being seen by its citizens as less a guarantor of their rights and more a contingent political organisation designed to protect vested interests, the state prefers to 'conceal its involvement (in trauma time) and claiming to be a provider not a destroyer of security' (Edkins, 2003, xv.) The state accomplishes this in a number of ways; by propagating discourses of security which centre upon the state as the key actor; claiming to provide security for its citizens; and, crucially for this chapter, through the ways in which it commemorates wars and other traumatic events. Edkins writes,

‘by rewriting these traumas into a linear narrative of national heroism...the state conceals the trauma that it has, necessarily, produced (Edkins, 2003, xv.)

The process of reconstruction and memorialisation is helpful in this regard. Most memorials attempt to absorb the trauma into narratives revolving around national heroism and sacrifice (Edkins, 2003, p. 57.) Rather than dwelling upon the trauma itself, memorials try to characterise the traumatic event as part of the existing narrative of the nation, or in the case of Croatia, making trauma central to the emergence of the nation itself. As Edkins points out, the literature on memory and commemoration splits between those who see memorials as response to the need for mourning and those who see them as a tool for nation building (Edkins, 2003, p. 92.) As this chapter makes clear it is possible to satisfy both needs.

This discussion of public space in Vukovar takes the reader to the city itself and attempts to illustrate how a view from the ground enables a reading of the political context in which the city is situated and situates itself. The way in which the chapter proceeds is by describing some of the most important and noticeable features of the physical landscape of the city as interpreted by the author in light of insights drawn from authors such as Edkins. It is important to briefly reflect upon this approach before proceeding as the method here is far from those which have dominated the subdiscipline of security studies.

The analysis below rests upon a number of observations made during the three fieldwork periods. These observations were not originally planned as part of the research, but as the fieldwork progressed it became harder to ignore the specific *Croatian* character of the physical surroundings. When compared to the narrative of settlement agreed upon by the Croatian state, the UN and the EU, the nature of the reconstructed city becomes not only peculiar but highly politicised, because it seems



to contradict the multiethnic composition of the city and the multiethnic tone of international agreements regarding the country and region.

The reconstructed city, itself a product of the peace settlement, problematises the multiethnic terms upon which that settlement rests. In deep contrast to the settlement discussed in the previous chapter, the building of contemporary Vukovar appears to have given away to a particular understanding of the war which rests not upon multiethnic experiences of suffering but upon false dichotomies of victory and defeat, aggressor and defender, which are also characterised by ethnic difference. The settlement therefore, which exists in law, is challenged by the everyday physical surroundings of lived experiences.

This is not the first such account of the ethnically particularist and exclusionary nature of physical reconstruction in Vukovar. Britt Baillee, for example, has assessed the extent to which Vukovar has been rebuilt in accordance with those who wish to reconstruct the Croatian heritage of the city (Baillee, forthcoming). Whilst offering an important account of heritage management in Vukovar, Baillee does not go far enough in developing an understanding of trauma and politics as seen through the reconstruction/memorialisation process. Edkins can be helpful here. It is also possible to compare the exclusionary tendency of urban living in Vukovar to the inclusive norms promised by the emancipatory process. The *politics* of reconstruction is the issue here then, and the extent to which that form of politics impacts upon everyday lived experience is the key question.

### *Projecting the nation: Public Space as Symbolic Space*

This section will detail the various ways in which public space has been transformed into symbolic space, the result of which is that a powerful narrative of the war is

projected throughout the city, capturing the debate about what the war in Croatia meant and how it should be remembered. The argument to be made here is that the nationalist narrative – that the war in Croatia was fought by Croatians for a free Croatia against an aggressor in the name of self defence, in which Croatians died for the good of their nation – is upheld first by the key projector, in this case the cross on the Danube, and then carried throughout the city in a number of ways, further projecting the narrative.

The state conceals its role in the production of trauma by infusing a powerful narrative of the war into daily life, linking the state to the dead so that both are held to be untouchable. The state entrenches itself by capturing the sense of loss and vulnerability felt by the survivors and weaving their emotions into a narrative which portrays the state simultaneously as means and end; the free state is presented as the ultimate cause worth dying for, and also as the means of security. The trauma of war, which the state actually had an important role in producing, is thus captured by the state itself. The pain of loss is subsumed by the state which seeks to use the profound moments of grief to build a national myth.

Standing in the centre of city can be seen a large white cross commemorating those who died during the Battle of Vukovar. The cross is approximately six metres high and sits atop a piece of rubble taken from what remained of the city following its destruction. The site of the cross is a purpose built platform situated at the end of a pathway running between the city square and the small port, and as such the cross is clearly visible to anyone who comes into the middle of the city. The cross is in pristine condition and is surrounded by a number of benches. Flanking the cross are three flags - those of country, county and city. In many respects the cross can be seen as standard war memorial.



In important ways however, the cross expresses something more than the need to remember the dead. We can begin by thinking about its position in the city. Vukovar stands on the eastern perimeter of Croatia. The trees that can be seen on the bottom left hand side of the image below, just across the River Danube, are in Serbia. The cross has been positioned facing Croatia but with its back to the old enemy. To a certain extent the cross speaks for itself; as a symbol of Christianity, built upon a piece of rubble from what was left of the city, facing Croatia with its back to Serbia and with an inscription about the Croatian fallen. It is hard for these meanings to be taken away as they are built into the cross itself; they are part of its being.



Image K: War memorial on the Danube, Vukovar, 2008.

The inscription on the cross reads ‘ZRTVAMA ZA SLOBODNU HRVATSKU’, or, ‘Sacrificed for the Freedom of Croatia’. This inscription pulls those who were killed in the war, the dead, the speechless, into a powerful narrative which interprets the



war and provides an answer to the question, 'what happened'. The dead are made sacred and are captured in a particular meaning, regardless of how they died and for what reasons. The cross therefore falls into a common narrative – the dead sacrifice themselves for the good of the nation. By linking the purpose of the war, Croatian liberty, to the memory of the sacred dead the cross cements an ethnically particularist understanding of the war and projects such an understanding outwards to the city by virtue of its central position. Pocket sized city maps provided to visitors show the cross out of scale, larger than its surroundings, drawing the eye. This cartographic representation matches the spatial and figurative placement of the cross as the geographic centre and the symbolic heart of the Croatian nationalist interpretation of the war.

The cross seeks to capture a total interpretation of the war, which is then projected not as interpretation but as truth. This fulfils an important role by settling the disruption caused by the war to the linear notion of time underpinning social life, plugging the cognitive space created by the trauma. Built upon a piece of rubble from the demolition of the city the cross stands as an act of defiance to those who had sought to destroy it, yet this too is telling. The sacred symbol of the cross stands atop the rubble, and as such the nationalist interpretation of the war is built upon what remained, subsuming it into its narrative. The rubble is thus not an object but is given meaning; it too is embraced by nationalism. The rubble is not cast aside and left to the periphery of memory but kept central to the interpretation of the war. The rubble, the destruction, is what makes modern day Vukovar and Croatia, the cross suggests, and the nation will stand atop what remained and build upon it something new. Like the core meanings of the cross the ways in which the flags are interpreted might also be seen as concrete. Their presence provides additional meaning to the



cross-that it is the Croatian dead who are to be mourned, to be remembered in the space provided for that purpose.

Overlooking the city is one of the most iconic images of Vukovar, the water tower. During the siege of the city in 1991 the tower, an important source of fresh water standing high above the cityscape, was an easy target for JNA attacks. Although the tower, as can be seen in figure B, suffered extensive damage and is no longer in use, it still stands and is today an image of Croatian defiance in the face of destruction. Looking closely at the image of the tower below the Croatian flag can be seen atop the tower, marking what was once functional as an emotive symbol of nationhood forged in war. The water tower can be seen in souvenir shops in Vukovar, where tourists can buy postcards with its image and handmade wooden miniature towers to take away. The tower was built not for aesthetics but for a practical and necessary reason; to supply Vukovar with water. It no longer functions in this capacity, and stands today for no practical reason. Although it remains standing, when inspected from close range the tower looks frail:



Image L: Water tower with Croatian flag, Vukovar, 2008.



The site upon which it stands is strewn with small pieces of debris which have, over time, fallen from the tower. Graffiti has been scrawled around the lower part of the tower, and birds have made their nests in the gaping holes in the upper sections sustained during the war.

Observers standing at the bottom of the tower and looking upwards would see little more than a tall, rotting lump of concrete, a shell of a building that had once served some purpose but is now awaiting demolition. Standing from this position, all that can be seen are the holes blasted open by bombs and the lack of care thereafter. A possible health and safety threat might even be detected, given its precarious appearance. The tower would be seen as a bombed out building, nothing more.

The flag secured upon the very top of the tower would not be visible. Given the height of the structure this can only be clearly seen from a distance, when observers are too far away to see the frailty of the edifice. When one views the tower from a distance, with the Croatian flag billowing in the wind, then the tower becomes a symbol of nationhood and resistance, but only from a distance. Walking closer to the tower the flag slowly disappears from view and its fragility becomes more obvious.

The meaning of the tower changes according to the perspective of the viewer, yet this is unproblematic for the state because few people inspect the tower in any great detail. It has not been preserved for tourists, and most people travelling through Vukovar will either pass by on the main road or on the Danube, where the tower can be viewed most spectacularly. It is not a site for walkers, it is not meant to be inspected close up, it is supposed to be viewed from a distance.



One conclusion of this interpretation is that this is not a coincidence, it did not happen by chance, but that the tower is not supposed to be inspected closely because it suits the interests of the state. If the state puts a flag upon a war damaged building and deters people from seeing it at close range it becomes sacred; if visitors are encouraged to view it closely it becomes a liability. The tower is not a tourist attraction, but it confers meaning upon the city to any visitor and to local people themselves.

The symbolic nature of the tower is beneficial to the state in important ways. It allows the state to continue avoiding the extent to which Vukovar remains as it was in the immediate aftermath of the war by making selected sites sacred. The idea seems to be that some places should remain as they were and should not change with the times. Thus the trauma of war is captured in selected places. Alongside other important buildings which remain as they were in December 1991, in ruins, the tower performs an important function not only by capturing the moment of destruction but by imprisoning the city itself in that moment.

There is an important difference between the cross and the tower. The cross was built after the war to commemorate the dead and as such as was built to secure the immediate feeling that the dead should not only be remembered but also a particular understanding of why they died. It is a manmade construction inspired by the desire of the state to impose meaning upon the trauma of violence, and by seeking to objectify the dead, to make them sacred and thus untouchable, the state is able to distance itself from its own role in producing the trauma, as Edkins outlines, whilst simultaneously entrenching itself in the memory of their supposed honour. The building of the cross arose out of the need for the new form of power, in the form of the nascent Croatian state, to force an acceptance of its inherent goodness.

The point here is that the cross was built partly to meet the human need for remembrance, but also to politicise that remembrance by linking the memory of the dead to the founding of the new state. The dead could have been remembered in other ways, and no doubt they are remembered in other ways by those who knew and loved them, but the state seeks to rival and displace such memories with its own narrative which may or may not be true. It may well be the case that some who fought and died in Vukovar did so for the idea of a free Croatia, and the state would legitimately be able to claim that this was the case for those professional soldiers and policemen who had sworn allegiance to Croatia. The elderly man killed in his garden by a grenade, or the mother shot by a sniper when searching for firewood, may have died for reasons other than a love of nation and liberty. The cross does not account for these differences and is unequivocal in its interpretation of death. It seeks to own those deaths by imposing a constructed notion of the inalienable right to state sovereignty, and by doing so it displaces the personal with the impersonal. The state hopes that this impersonal narrative of events will come to feel natural, that over time the impersonal will feel personal.

This creates a tension with which the state is unable to cope. The state seeks to own the deaths of those who were killed during the war by capturing the memory of them into a narrative of new beginnings and hope, perhaps the most politically seductive and intoxicating idea of the twentieth century, that of self determination. By imposing such a positive narrative of the past it struggles to deal with the pain and vulnerability caused by the war and strongly felt by many.

Thus the meaning of the tower becomes clearer; as the state struggles to impose memory it has to find ways of countering alternative narratives of the war. One way of achieving this is to keep the ruins rather than to build over them and to



strike them with the mark of the state, such as a flag. The flag links the object to the constructed memory of the past, in this case enshrined by the cross, which has the flag not only standing next to it but engraved upon it. The object then ceases to be a ruin of war but a crucial part of the state-imposed narrative. It says, 'look at what *they* did to us. *We* are still here'. The tower is therefore an instrument of the state because it serves to project the nationalist narrative to the city; it takes the vulnerability of the city, seeks to capture its meaning and projects it as truth.

The symbols in Vukovar supporting the nationalist narrative of war thus work by encapsulating the key tenets of the story in the cross – the sacrifice for the nation, the sacred and sanctified dead, the facing down of an enemy – and then projecting them throughout the city using a range of carriers. The cross is thus at the heart of the nationalist narrative projection, with the tower the most prominent carrier of the narrative. There are other smaller but no less important carriers.



Image M: Statue of Tudjman, with cross in background, Vukovar, 2009.

The statue of Tudjman is key in this regard. A short walk from the cross is the square, and standing in the middle of the square is a statue of the first Croatian President, Franjo Tudjman. The statue was erected in 1998 following the ending of the UN transitional administration period and at the beginning of the formal political



and legal settlement. The statue is the only one of its kind in the spacious square, and replaced a statue dedicated to the dead of the Second World War which was pulled down after the 1991-95 war. In this way the symbolism of past conflict is supplanted by that of the recent war, and thus memory is reshaped not only for a new generation, but for a new style of politics. The memory of the past conflict which led to the foundation of Yugoslavia is confined to the dustbin of history, and in its place a new focal point for remembering political violence in the image of the new state and its totalising project is built.

When the debris was cleared and the city established as Croatian territory, this is what was chosen to mark the centrepiece of public space in Vukovar, a statue of a war leader and first national President. This is one example of how the state is able to conceal its own involvement in the production of trauma. Placing the war leader in such a prominent position, in a space which had been destroyed and rebuilt above the rubble, entrenches the memory of Tudjman in a positive light. The dead are rendered sacred but anonymous, but the war leader is held up in personal glory as a hero. He is the one who delivered an independent Croatia from the hand of tyranny, led the nation to safety through its time of strife. He will be commemorated as such.

Every year on November 18<sup>th</sup> the statue of Tudjman is one of the focal points, along with the cross and the hospital, of the Memorial Day which commemorates the day Vukovar fell. Former Croatian soldiers, politicians and relatives of the dead and missing line up in front of the statue to salute their war leader. This is one of the great victories, not for Croatia or Vukovar, but for the state itself, for the state has successfully woven a narrative interpreting the war which places the Croatian state as the victim, and Tudjman as the heroic defender.



The statue fulfils its most important function on behalf of the totalising project once a year, but it projects the nationalist narrative continuously not so much because of who it depicts, but the fact it is located in the centre of Vukovar and is thus deemed centrally important to the city itself. The statue establishes the square not only as a Croatian space but also as a place won by Croats. Furthermore, it personalises the struggle, not outwardly by asking citizens to consider their own grief in their own way, but inwardly by asking citizens to turn their memory of the war towards the leader himself.

The city square itself is primarily a place of recreation, it is a truly public space; there are no barriers, no guarded entrances, it is open to all to sit or walk through, to meet and to talk. The statue is now an established part of the city rather than a novelty. On Memorial Day the state attempts to ensure that Tudjman's place in the nationalist narrative is re-established. As with the cross this is partly a component of the process known as remembrance by which people come together to remember the dead whom they knew and loved, but it is also political because the state is seeking to impose its own narrative upon events.

The square becomes a natural place to gather because, given its emptiness, it is a practical space for the large numbers. The statue however deepens the meaning of remembrance in the interests of the totalising project, because it re-establishes each year the hierarchy needed to wage war. As the veterans lower their hand-carried flags and salute the war leader, they are no longer standing in the city square; they are on a parade ground. Once it becomes a parade ground citizens are encouraged to offer thanks to the leader. The day of remembrance not only allows the survivors to remember the dead collectively, it serves to remind veterans that



they were once soldiers, that Tudjman was their leader and that he ultimately led them to victory. This does not necessary favour the HDZ, Tudjman's party; in the 2009 local elections the HDZ mayoral candidate was defeated by the Social Democratic Party. What this style of remembrance really seeks to achieve is to entrench the nationalist narrative of the war in the public consciousness to such an extent that it appears 'above politics' and thus untouchable, as sacred as the dead enshrined by the cross.

The square is situated between a road named V. Nazora and a pedestrian walkway to the cross, flanked by the Danube to the east and the main road to Osijek and Vojvodina in Serbia named Dr F. Tudmana, after Tudjman himself, to the west. The square is generally regarded as the centre of the city, a natural meeting place and a space for occasional public gatherings; celebratory, cultural and political. The square itself takes up about half an acre of space.



Image N: Rebuilt square with partially renovated Workers' Club in background, Vukovar, 2009.

There are benches for sitting, some flowers planted in purpose built basins, an unimposing clock in one corner, but little else on the square itself. Indeed, the square seems to exist in Vukovar not because it performs a specific daily role, such



as accommodating a market or providing a thoroughfare for passers-by, cyclists and trams, but because it honours a longstanding European tradition of urban planning; that a city is not a city unless it has a square. The square offers a place of rest, a quiet spot to pontificate in a quiet city; more significantly however, the statue serves as a constant supporter of Tadjman's role as a hero.

In important ways the square performs another political role, as it is not only as a place for congregating every once in a while, but a space in which meanings about the war in Vukovar specifically and Croatia as a nation are transmitted and upheld. An individual seated on a bench in the square would be able to see a great deal of the city, for unlike many squares which are closed off on all sides by shops and cafes, the square in Vukovar is open on two sides, and one of the closed sides is bordered only by the narrow and slow moving River Vuka, allowing views to the north of the city. The openness of the square itself allows the observer to take into consideration many views; the new banks, showing Croatia's movement away from the old state-run economy of Yugoslavia; coffee-bar culture; the river as a source of life and leisure. The observer might also take into account the view of the ruined former Workers' Building, which once housed the local branch of the Communist Party and then became a reputable hotel, now a shell of a bombed out building, windowless and skeletal. Across the Vuka one would see another ruin from the war, next to a convenience store and a newspaper seller, and looking towards the mighty Danube, impossible to neglect, is the brilliant white of the cross and the three flags billowing in the breeze.





Image O: View across the harbour showing ongoing rebuilding work, Vukovar, 2009.

It is tempting to characterise these views from the square in terms of old and new, yet this would be a mistake. In a city where everything was touched by the onslaught of war, everything in Vukovar is new. Even in the many cases where buildings have been left untouched since the war they mark the point at which the city was changed from a prosperous Danube settlement into a ruin. The buildings, roads and pavements which have been reconstructed seek to capture something of the past that was taken in 1991, yet the city as a whole has not escaped the fact that that year saw its transformation.



Image P: Disused building showing war damage alongside reconstructed buildings, Vukovar, 2009.



Unlike a place such as, for example, Ypres, which has been rebuilt exactly as it was prior to the destruction of the Great War, Vukovar is undergoing a process which seems to be attempting to both mark the tragedy of the war and capture that which was taken away by it. It is this tension within urban design, between remembering the war and forgetting it, which is a more accurate characterisation of Vukovar than the notion of old and new. Coupled with this tension between remembering and forgetting is the growing awareness of Vukovar being situated in a country still undergoing a transition from state-planning to the market economy, seen in the prominent banks on the square and in the growth of private businesses (some owned by war profiteers) in the city. The city is therefore being pushed towards the liberal capitalist order, at a time when it is also trying to locate its sense of history and also attempting to immortalise its recent history into a coherent, ethnically particularist narrative. Scholars who have noted the emergence of liberal economic thinking *as well as* increasing attachments to ethnicity have characterised the dominant ideology in Croatia as liberal nationalism (Massey *et al*, 2003).

For these reasons Vukovar is in some sense an unsettled place, a city in which people know ‘something happened’ in 1991, a city which is looking to find (or create) its history amid the ruins, and a city which is trying to look towards future prosperity and contentment which might come through the market. For a city which had been assured of its history, identity and prosperity until 1991, the sense of trauma transmitted through the changed and changing cityscape must be profound.

Although much reconstruction work has been done since Vukovar was returned to Croatia in 1998 there still remain many destroyed buildings throughout the city, and it is common to see a semi-destroyed or ruined building next to a brand new one.





Image Q: Old and new houses, Vukovar, 2009.

The centre of city is slowly being returned to its Baroque glory, yet some of the largest and most significant buildings remain empty shells, such as the former Workers' Building on the city square. The result of this is that Vukovar appears as a city in transition, unsettled, somewhere between the trauma of war and the successful reattachment of its present self to history.



Image R: Disused houses awaiting demolition, Vukovar, 2009.

In the centre there remain two eyesores from the war, reminders of the trauma: as well as the Workers' Building on the square, there is the old cinema. A city can be rebuilt and as it changes shape and appearance the visible scars of war disappear, and with it the perception of the city by visitors and residents alike change too. Yet war changes society as a whole, and such changes in collective thought become



naturalised over time. Such changes can be just as visible – for example in the symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, but they can also be hidden and more ambiguous; they might exist in attitudes to foreign cultures, in attitudes towards what it means to be a Croatian, in how the country sees itself. A place can be rebuilt so that nobody would ever know that it had once been destroyed, but that destruction leaves an indelible mark upon those who were unfortunate enough to experience it firsthand, and upon the society they inhabit and construct.



Image S: Restored courthouse, Vukovar, 2009.

This sense of being lost in time aids the daily carriers of the nationalist narrative because it keeps open the unsettling vacuum of memory which the totalising project can appear to fill with the comforting knowledge of the war being worthwhile. The transformation of public space into symbolic space does not just occur at the macro level but also filters through to the level of smaller sites of public interaction such as cafes, bars and restaurants. One student of Serbian nationality living in Vukovar pointed out how the very spaces used for leisure time are themselves divided according to ethnicity; ‘we still feel divided’, he explains, even though the divisions are not as explicit as they were in the immediate aftermath of the war (I48, 2008).





Image T: Restored central Vukovar, 2009.

Throughout Vukovar such sites are often infused with nationalist sentiments by virtue of Croatian flags being clearly visible in many establishments. It is also not uncommon to find flags supplemented by more explicit images of nationalism and war. Posters of Vukovar as it lay in ruins in 1991 can be seen in some establishments. In at least one bar an image of Ante Pavelić, the leader of the Nazi supporting Ustashe regime which led Croatia during the Second World War, can be seen alongside photographs of dead soldiers from the 1991-95 conflict, draped in a ribbon showing the colours of the national flag.

Images of Pavelić are rare in Croatia, yet it is important to note that some Croatians draw parallels between the Nazi supporting regime of World War Two and the recent war. Despite the well documented history of Croatia's wartime collaboration with the Nazis, which resulted in hundreds of thousands of Serbs and Roma being sent to the notorious concentration camp at Jasenovac, it seems that some Croatians feel comfortable making public displays of the perceived positive link between the Ustashe leader and those killed in the recent war. The ribbon literary and figuratively links the recent conflict to the experience of a past war.



All public buildings and the majority of cafes, bars, restaurants and shops display the Croatian flag in prominent places, often a framed version fixed to the wall behind the counter. The image of the flag is not necessarily a carrier of the nationalist narrative; it is a nation symbol certainly, but its meaning is not fixed. It can be argued that in Vukovar the proximity to powerful carriers of the nationalist narrative such as the cross and the tower mean that flags also act as carriers of this specific meaning. The flags transmit a powerful message to citizens and visitors alike, the notion that ‘this is Croatia’. When seen in conjunction with the cross, the tower and the statue of Tudjman, the flags seem to act as stamps of ownership space, not just to say that the property itself is Croatian, although this is an important part of the message, but also to say that this place is possible *because of the sacrifice made by the dead*.



Image U: Restaurant in Vukovar, 2009. Between the freezer of ice-cream and the fridge of beer, note the poster of Vukovar in 1991 next to other key nationalist signifiers: the flag and the national football team.

This may not be the case in other Croatian towns and cities, however in Vukovar where proximity to death and to the war is self-evident because of prevalence of war damage and memorials, the flags affirm the idea of nationhood as being in conjunction with sacrifice. Public space is thus infused with meaning which serves



the totalising project, ensuring that daily life will always involve multiple encounters with the symbols of the state which the state itself has linked to the sacrifice of the dead made during war for the good of the nation.



Image V: Road sign commemorating a military unit from the war, Vukovar, 2009. Street names, such as the one seen in the image above, indicate the extent to which nationalisation has impacted upon urban space. These daily encounters with the symbols of the totalising project serve to transmit meaning onto the ruins which continue to litter the city. Vukovar is full of partly or fully destroyed structures that were once houses, shops or larger buildings such as a cinema or the old Eltz Manor, a Habsburg era house that was an important regional museum. The ruins mix with the reconstruction work, yet their presence is strongly felt. The ruins are often exactly as they were during the war, holding the moment of destruction in time. As Vukovar changes and new buildings are constructed throughout the city, the ruins remain, and as such there is a dual sense of temporality occurring.





Image W: Derilict house, Vukovar, 2009.

On the one hand the city runs according to ‘normal’ linear time; the clocks keep going forward, new buildings are erected and the totalising project is able to make the claim that progress is being made as gradually the ruins are cleared. On the other hand, trauma time is at work here, as the ruins capture the exact moment in linear time that Vukovar was transformed from prosperous Danube city to a city of ruins. The ruins are stuck in time, unmoved by ‘progress’, and as such they convey not a memory of the war but the war itself. Unlike the tower, most ruins in Vukovar do not have the explicit mark of the totalising project. They are simply objects that once served a purpose. This is not to say that they are not emotionally connected to citizens, indeed, it is likely that many of the ruins do have significant meaning to at least some of the survivors who perhaps lived, worked or played there before the war.

It is important however to see the ruins in conjunction with the symbols discussed above – the cross, the flags and particularly the tower. These symbols also provide meaning to the ruins because they bring the ruins into the nationalist narrative. The tower is especially important in this regard because it is itself a ruin,



and thus the city can be portrayed as a living memorial. There is tension here, because the ruins can both support and resist attempts by the state to incorporate them into the nationalist narrative. The ruins can support the state because they serve as a daily reminder of what happened to the city, of what was lost, which is useful for the state because it uses these images to reinforce the notion that it defended the Croatian people.



Image X: Derilict buildings, Vukovar, 2009.

However, as the state seeks to embrace progress the ruins become more an embarrassment because they imply the state is unable to develop further. In these ways the ruins have an ambiguous relationship with the totalising project, as the state seems unsure where to preserve or to forget the destruction. Keep them and the memory of war can be easily kept alive because trauma time will always be explicitly in the present which the state will be able to use in the production of the national myth; build over the ruins and portray a story of 'progress', but lose an overt symbol of the nationalist narrative, the symbol of the loss.





Image Y: War damaged building, Vukovar, 2009.

The state is torn between the need to remind people of the trauma of war, necessary because it reminds the generation of survivors of what the ‘other’ did to them, which serves to reinforce the totalising project as saviour, and the need to show people the benefits of self determination. The direction the state has taken has been to rebuild the city slowly, and it is likely that within a decade there will be few ruins left in Vukovar. It does seem likely that it will be in the interest of the state to retain at least some ruins exactly as they were, and this may well be the long term importance of the tower.

A different option is to further remove the memory of the war from the explicit location of the ruins as they stand to the contained and ordered location of the museum. The hospital offers one such site, where visitors are guided through displays of the wards as they were during the siege in late-1991. Mannequins take the place of the humans who sheltered there, and the names of those who were taken to Ovchara and killed line one of the walls. Visitors can take away different objects to remind them of their encounter with the museum. One is a poster of a bold red cross



with holes through, symbolising the fact that the hospital was a target. Below the cross, the poster reads '*Mjesto Sjećanja Vukovarska Bolnica 1991*', which translates as '*Place of Memory Vukovar Hospital 1991*'.

Vukovar City Museum also seeks to manage the memory of the war within exhibitions which contrast the pre-war and the post-war cityscapes and which preserve various artefacts from centuries past. Concerns about these artefacts among those involved in the cultural heritage of the region within the Council of Europe were registered while the war in Croatia was still ongoing (see Von Imhoff, 1995). Centuries old objects found within the rubble are now safely preserved within the walls of the city museum; something of the past protected amid the trauma and destruction of the present. What is particularly interesting about the museum is that not only is there an attempt to present the past through objects, but to make a declaration about the future. Upon leaving the museum visitors can purchase inexpensive paper white doves with the words *Vukovarska Bijela Golubica* (Vukovar White Dove) written on the side. Thus the journey to the constructed past facilitated by the museum is infused with moral meaning also.

The impact of the developments discussed so far upon how Vukovar is seen by outsiders both foreign and domestic has been profound. In conjunction with the movement towards managing memory in museums there has been an attempt to show the city as a place of history and culture rather than of war. This is no easy task, as according to officials at the Vukovar tourist office, the main motive for visiting the city is to honour the war dead (I47, 2009).





Image Z: Guided tour party, Vukovar, 2009.

An observer standing in sight of the cross on the Danube in spring and summer would see large groups of all ages, sometimes one group per hour, being guided around the memorial before travelling in buses out to Ovčara to see the memorials to the two hundred found there.

Most such groups come to Vukovar only for a day, paying their respects to the dead, eating lunch and then leaving. The tourist office try to encourage more people to stay in the city for a night, but few do; as one official put it, people don't come to Vukovar to relax, just to pay their respects to the victims of war before leaving to have fun somewhere else. It is a similar scenario with school children throughout Croatia, for whom it has become an obligation to visit Vukovar at some point during their education. The tourist official however wants to try and 'sell' Vukovar as being more than a city devastated by war; 'we want to show that Vukovar is famous not only for the war but for its 5000 years of history' (I47, 2009).

Pamphlets available for visitors, some of which were produced before the war and actually talk about Yugoslavia, detail the cultural heritage of the region and carry photographs of traditional dress, fine Baroque buildings and picturesque spots by the Danube. One such pamphlet, published in 1973, was found by the author at a



tourist outlet in Vukovar, entitled '*Jugoslavija, Hrvatska, Slavonija - Kulturno - Historijski - Spomenici - Folklor*', which translates as '*Yugoslavia, Croatia, Slavonia – Cultural – Historical – Monuments – Folklore*'. Tourists are encouraged to see this heritage, regardless of the political implications of invoking Yugoslavia from which Croatia was created.

Those who work in the tourist industry in Vukovar may well make their daily living through war tourism, but they have long term aims to present the city as it was. As one official put it, 'we want to present Vukovar as an old Croatian city on the Danube with a rich culture, tradition and history' (I47, 2009). This is the image they are trying to present to the growing number of tourists from Austria and Germany who stop in Vukovar for a day during their Danube cruises. It is also the image invoked by individual institutions in Vukovar, such as the Catholic church of St Philip and Jacob, which produces pamphlets for visitors recalling the long history of Christian worship in the city and the continuity of the church from its foundation in the early eighteenth century to the present (see *Franjevački Samostan Crkva Sv. Filipa I Jakova, Vukovar, 1723-2003*, author and date of publication unknown. The pamphlet is available at the church).

There have been recent discussions within the tourist industry in Vukovar concerning the developments the city could pursue to make it more attractive to outsiders. These have included a viewing station on the river so that visitors would be able to view the city in profile, but with the addition of the ruined water tower and the white cross. Another idea is for a campsite, although the continued presence of landmines is a potential problem here, and plans for an amusement park to attract more young people have also been mooted. There have even been plans for a flying club which could take visitors up in a hot air balloon to view the flat plains of eastern



Slovenia and across the river, Vojvodina in Serbia; however, these plans were halted when it was realised there would be a danger of the balloon inadvertently entering Serbian airspace (I47, 2009).



Image Zi: Mined field, Vukovar, 2009.

Landmines remain a constant concern in the surrounding area, and the above photograph depicts a scene common along the roads leading in and out of the city. One innovative civil society programme which developed in California, called Roots of Peace, involved removing mines and planting vines in their place (Roots of Peace, online resource, 2007).

The development of tourism in Vukovar will clearly take time, and it is not certain that a move away from war tourism will happen. Interestingly, one tourist industry official makes a link between the development of tourism and ethnic relations; 'the development of tourism is connected to the development of inter-personal relations. We need time for normalisation...we don't want to talk about politics'. Talking about politics would risk the dominant narrative of the war being openly challenged, so as Vukovar seeks to attract more people it will only do so in the context created for it by the totalising project. Of course, discussions about how best to present Vukovar to the outside world are in themselves political insofar as the



thought processes which drive them are formed in part by power relations, but for many people the realm of politics is too ethnically sensitive and divisive to warrant attention.

Thus the tourist industry has sought to depoliticise itself, preferring to concentrate on attempting to regain something of the past which is understood as being neutral territory far removed from the traumatic events of 1991. Yet the following passage from a tourist brochure, *Vukovar, Turistička Zajednica Grada Vukovara*, introducing Vukovar to the visitor, complete with attractive photos of the reconstructed city and of daily life, suggests that the politics of the present is intricately bound with understandings of the past and with public image:

‘In 1991, the city was destroyed and occupied by Serbian aggressor and all non-Serbian population was expelled and captured in concentration camps. Since 1997, when the process of peaceful reintegration started, the city has been reconstructing and nowadays is gradually regaining the look of a European city; the look it once used to have. Therefore, the hearts and faces of the young are needed; the hearts of healthy keen and educated young people’ (Tourist Board Vukovar, 2006a, p. 14).

A passage from a different publication intended for tourists makes the connection between past and present more explicit:

‘Vukovar is a miraculous town. Vukovar is pride. Vukovar is defiance. It’s a tear in one’s eye, sorrow at one’s heart, and a smile on one’s lips. Vukovar is both past and future’ (Vukovar Tourist Board, 2006b, p. 3).

It has been noted by scholars that both Croatia and Slovenia have attempted to frame a so-called ‘exit from the Balkans’ and a ‘return to Europe’ following the wars in the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s, by defining their national identities against Balkan or Yugoslav ones; such a desire to establish a European identity, however, occurs in conjunction with a tacit acknowledgement that such a status is ontologically unstable (Lindstrom, 2003). Unstable though it may be, it is a reaction



to what scholars have understood as centuries of Orientalism as applied to the Balkans – to ‘Balkanism’ (Todorova, 1994; Bakic-Hayden, 1995; Dupcsik, 2001; Ruazsa and Lindstrom, 2004; Hammond, 2005; Hammond, 2006).

Even so, the narrative which describes Croatian war heroism in the name of political independence which allowed the country to ‘return to Europe’ has helped Vukovar to become *the* defining symbol of the war in Croatia for many Croats, a symbol of sacrifice and their own sense of victimhood. This is evident in the fact that the Croatian President routinely visits Vukovar on 18<sup>th</sup> November each year to commemorate its fall, in the naming of a ‘Vukovar Street’ in every Croatian city, the fact that hugely popular (and right wing) Croatian bands such as Thompson (the name deriving from the lead singer favouring a machine gun of the same name during the war) began their nationwide tour in Vukovar, and the numerous videos available in outlets such as YouTube depicting the city as a place of heroes. A film called *The Trinity of Vukovar*, which focuses on the experience of the hospital, the ‘defenders’ and the Catholic church, starring the Oscar nominee Toni Collette and directed by Sydney based Croat Jaz Spelic, is in production (For further information see [www.thetrinityofvukovar.com](http://www.thetrinityofvukovar.com)).

Vukovar provides an outlet through which the nation can direct its trauma, the city designated as the appropriate site for soaking up the grief and anger of the country as a whole. The attempt to reconstruct the past is infused with the politics of the present in these ways, and the notion of reclaiming the ‘look of a European city’ from history cannot be value free because the face of the city was scarred by the *Serbian* other. The emphasis on the *European* identity of Vukovar relates to the wider strategy of the Croatian Tourist Board, which seeks to present Croatia as ‘a European parliamentary state and part of European political and cultural history’



(Croatian National Tourist Board, 2008, p. 1). Another publication produced for tourists states confidently that

‘the people of Vukovar will again make their city a place of comfortable living, an oasis of peaceful life in the east of the great and hurried Europe, to which the city and the whole of Croatia has always belonged’ (Tourist Board Vukovar-Srijem County, 2004, p. 9).

### *Public Space and Discrimination*

It is significant that some of those engaged in peacebuilding in Vukovar have noted how public space impacts upon personal relations in the city. The impact of the partial settlement upon relationships will be explored further in the next chapter, but several insights from the interviews are particularly relevant here.

One NGO worker, Ljiljana Gehrecke, recounts a story regarding the impact of mono-ethnic forms of memorialisation. She remembers being asked by two German reporters in 2009 whether or not it was possible that no Serbs died during the war, and replying that ‘there is not a war where only one side dies’. The two reporters had visited Ovcara and Vukovar hospital and found no mention of Serbs, but only of Croats. Gehrecke wants to have both sides of the story told, so that Serbs and other non-Croats are able to publicly remember their dead. She believes that ‘until that happens, this peace is not stable, because the side that is not mentioned feels discriminated. It’s tense’ (I2, 2009).

The *feeling* of divisiveness is important and not intangible to Ljiljana Gehrecke and acts as a counterweight to the silences of everyday life; ‘if you are a Croat you are dominant and that’s not something you can say, but *you can feel it* (I2, 2009; emphasis added). There is a connection here between the feeling of divisiveness and the discussions regarding public space in the previous chapter. Consider the following passage:



‘Everything is Croatian, you can see that everywhere. In the theatre, on the curtains it reads “Croatian Women’s Organisation to the People of Vukovar”, and it says everywhere, “Croats”. I understand that and it doesn’t bother me, but it bothers a lot of people. Because Serbians don’t want to go to the theatre then because they don’t feel welcome, and that’s not good’ (I2, 2009).

An external organisation presents a gift in the way of a theatre curtain to the city, an act of civil society imbued with political meaning, and as a result another public place is claimed by the state. Lifestyles adapt to the new meaning imposed on such places because they do not feel a sense of ownership, it is not *theirs*, and one avenue of artistic exposure and expression is closed off to the minority which further exacerbates the feeling of division.

Another NGO staff member makes the link between public space and the everyday. Asked if public space reminded people of the war, he replied

‘Yes. The space in the parks and everything is for healing people. It depends what you will do with this space. If you create something that reminds you of war people will immediately think about it and they just walk around thinking of the war’ (I9, 2009).

Not all public space in Vukovar can be seen in this way. In recent years, for example, an annual international film festival has been hosted by Vukovar, with films being shown on a riverboat moored on the Danube. Symbolically, the move towards cultural openness takes place literally on the border with Serbia. On the basis of what has been presented in this chapter, it may take more than a few years for such developments to establish a firmer foothold within the cultural life of the city, and even if they do they would have to coexist with the ethnically particularist understanding of the war discussed in this chapter.

### *Conclusion*

This chapter has sought to problematise the peace settlement described in the previous chapter by taking the reader to Vukovar itself. It has described a physical



space in which a narrative of the war in Croatia and in Vukovar specifically is projected. In contrast to the multiethnic norms espoused by the settlement supported by politicians such as Ivo Sanader, the narrative projected throughout Vukovar is one which favours a particular Croatian perspective.

Through such physical memorials as the cross, the tower and the statue of Tudjman a narrative is constructed and projected through the reconstructed city which portrays Croatian victimhood and Croatian victory, but which silenced non-Croatian memories. This narrative is supported by a range of smaller symbols such as flags, graffiti and posters which carry the nationalist message into cafes, shops and official buildings. A Boothian move to understand security not at the level of the state but at the level of the individual, coupled with an emphasis on experiences of insecurity and security as they are lived, suggests that public space has been transformed into symbolic space in Vukovar.

The arguments presented in this chapter suggest that everyday life in Vukovar is infused with a constant projection of a constructed memory of the war which does not favour dialogic principles. This has important consequences. Firstly, public space is no longer truly public because of powerful ethnically-particularist symbols which exclude non-Croatian citizens. Secondly, the ethnically-particularist nature of the symbols discussed in this chapter suggests the post-war peace to be only a partial settlement.

The use of Edkins is crucial in framing the physical cityscape in Vukovar as a response to the traumatic events described in the previous chapter. Vukovar exists as an unsettled space because a number of competing temporal frameworks exist there. The final section of the chapter suggests that this impacts upon social relations in the



city, primarily because physical space serves to promote a narrative that unjustly excludes non-Croats.

The following chapter continues this theme by taking into consideration the nature of inter-ethnic relations in Vukovar. By understanding the everyday experiences of insecurity in Vukovar, theoretical debates about security and emancipation are animated in a way that reveals their human characteristics. The wider purpose here is to show the utility of understanding security and emancipation through lived experiences.



## Chapter 5

### A Partial Settlement II: Division and Contestation

#### *Introduction*

The previous chapter problematised the peace settlement in Vukovar by showing how the process of post-war reconstruction and memorialisation favours one ethnicity above others, which runs contrary to the multiethnic composition of the city and to the fact that suffering was not confined to one ethnic group. This chapter continues the theme of problematising the settlement but takes a different form.

The chapter focuses on interview material from Vukovar which suggests the post-war peace remains only a partial settlement. The purpose of the chapter is to show that when personal experiences and opinions are taken into account the divisions and ambiguities of living in the 'post-war' period are revealed. Difference and contestation, rather than settlement, emerge as characteristic of the 'post-war'. Ultimately, it is the nature of these contestations which provide the impetus for much civil society activity, to be discussed in the following chapter. The task here then is to show the politics of the 'post-war' period which further reveal the partial nature of the settlement.

The chapter falls short of describing Vukovar as a divided city, as other scholars have done (see Baillie, forthcoming). Although there are divisions within the city it would be too simplistic to interpret those divisions in binary form, as Croat vs Serb, Catholic vs Orthodox, winner vs loser. The divisions and tensions highlighted here are far from unambiguous, and instead suggest a high degree of *ongoing* contestation. The sources discussed here imply a continuing debate about what the war meant and how people in Vukovar should now live, and it is a debate



formed in large part by various individual and collective reactions to the war which are themselves unsettled. Whereas the state attempts to find closure with regards to the past, to define a new beginning and to lend these new visions of past and future physicality in memorials and statues, the people who have to live surrounded by these material and metaphysical structures are still living with the war in the present.

The chapter proceeds in three sections. The first part deals directly with the structures and institutions discussed in chapter 3, such as the legal framework, the economy, the UN and the EU, which were supposed to deliver the 'post-war' settlement. Interview material reveals an ongoing process of contestation regarding these factors, calling into question the dominant narrative which presents Croatia as having completed a successful transition from 'war-torn' to European accession.

The second section traces the contested legacy of the war to a local level by exploring understandings of Vukovar as a 'divided' place and analysing apparent manifestations of the 'division' in key settings such as local politics, schools and churches. This section further challenges the notion of the 'post-war' settlement by showing how some individuals understand Vukovar as profoundly unsettled in terms of social and political relations.

The third section further challenges the notion of settlement but in less tangible ways. It explores the continuing human impact of the war by addressing themes such as forgiveness, trust, victimhood, war crimes, memory and loss. The purpose of this section will be to attempt an understanding of how the experience of insecurity in the past shapes living in the present long after apparent settlements have been drawn up. This raises questions about the linkage between institutions and security made by Linklater, as well as upholding Booth's scepticism towards the state as an agent of security.



### *The Partial Deliverance of Settlement*

In challenging the notion of a settlement in Vukovar it is appropriate to begin with the very structures and institutions which were tasked with delivering the 'post-war' settlement and which consider Croatia to have completed a successful transition from insecurity to security. One such structure was the legal framework which was supposed to guarantee liberal democratic rights for every citizen. For many in Vukovar, however, there is an apparent distance between that framework and actual implementation.

One NGO, Peace Centre Vukovar, has been heavily engaged with the legal dimensions of the partial settlement since the end of the war. They argue that there has not been very much progress in the application of human rights in Croatia since the war. 'We think that they are very often on the edge of the law', says one staff member regarding the Croatian government. They are concerned also with the instruments of state action, he says, stating 'we still don't have stable institutions' (I20, 2008). The problem is not the law itself, but its application. 'There's a good law, a good framework, but it's a question of whether it is enforced or not', explains another Peace Centre Vukovar worker. Rights continue to be fought for in Croatia, and especially in places such as Vukovar which suffered more than most and subsequently has a more troublesome legacy to deal with. 'The legal system and framework is good but the problem is that it's not enforced the way it should be. But the system is good', she explains (I21, 2009). The application of the law, of the settlement itself, remains a great challenge.

In other areas, however, the framework itself is the problem. One NGO volunteer living in Vukovar, a Serb from Serbia who married another Serb from Vukovar, found that she would have to live in Croatia for seven years before being



granted full citizenship; 'I will be a foreigner', she says, 'so the only thing I have is a working license'. This limits the jobs she is able to apply for as most require full citizenship, hence her decision to volunteer at a Vukovar based NGO, Europe House. This suggests that areas of the law do not account for these forms of mixed marriage very easily, indeed, in this case the law seems to incentivise movement outside of the country for couples such as these. The result is a perception of ethnic division; 'I heard a lot of stories about how Vukovar is divided, but didn't believe them until I came here', she recalls (I4, 2009).

It is precisely this legal framework that was supposed to be set in place by the United Nations as part of the 'peaceful reintegration' period. The concerns with the framework raised above are matched by concerns regarding the role of the UN mission itself in Vukovar among other NGO workers. Srdan Antic, a project leader with the Nansen Dialogue Centre based in the nearby city of Osijek, was not impressed by the work of the United Nations during the peaceful reintegration period, describing them as 'peacekeepers, not peacebuilders' (I10, 2008). The implication is that the UN only succeeded in limiting forms of open violence, the manifestations of conflict described by Žižek as 'subjective violence', as violence performed by a directly identifiable agent (Žižek, 2008, p. 1). Understanding the underlying systemic factors which lead to those of violence is left to civil society actors.

Charles Tauber, Head of Mission for Southeast Europe for the Coalition for Work with Psychotrauma and Peace (CWWPP), is particularly scathing of the UN operation in Vukovar. Having been in Vukovar throughout the UN transitional period he has firsthand experience of the 'peaceful reintegration' process. They were hypocritical, he argues, elitist, 'top-down' and ignorant of the very processes they



sought to facilitate; one 'Democratisation Officer' asked him what democratisation meant. UN troops threw lavish parties, used prostitutes and showed little respect for anybody else. The UN were also too short-termist and thought that everything in Vukovar could be solved within a matter of months. Tauber also asserts that the UN altered reports in favour of Croatia many times, although he refused to elaborate upon this in interviews. He was also frustrated by the acceptance by the UN of Croatia's 'elitist' view of psychology and scepticism of alternative methods (I26, 2008). 'You really can't excuse the UN', he says, 'they should have the experience'. Having said this, however, Tauber also reveals he wrote to senior UN officials in the region requesting them not to leave so soon (I27, 2008). Yet he maintains he has little respect for what they did in Vukovar, and he does not approve of the UN painting the mission as a success (I31, 2009).

These levels of disapproval and doubt not only apply to past involvement with international institutions, but also to future engagement. Indeed, there is a level of fear present when Croatia's involvement with the 'international community' is considered. Srdan Antic, for example, believes that the Croatian government is misleading the European Union by covering up local tensions in places like Vukovar. 'The government say one thing at the European level and another at the local level' he argues (I10, 2008). Inter-ethnic relations are presented as far more settled and unproblematic than they are at a local level, but at the same time local politicians adopt the war rhetoric of 1991 to win elections by manipulating war trauma. Serbs and Croats are guilty of this, he believes, 'selling a story to Europe that everything is perfect in Croatia' whilst asking their constituents to consider what might happen to ethnic relations if they do not vote for them. The danger is that Croatia will end up entering the EU as an ethnically cleansed state, he believes, as a



xenophobic nation, intolerant, and unprepared for the prospect of open migration and multiculturalism which membership of the European Union would bring (I11, 2009).

Charles Tauber also sees an international narrative which gives Croatia all the credit for winning the peace and being on the 'right side' (I28, 2008). There is a sense here that an image of a harmonious nation is being sold to the international community by Croatia. Although there is truth in this to a degree, with the UN peacekeeping mission in Vukovar being seen as successful, commentators such as Paddy Ashdown and Richard Holbrooke, both with deep experience of international affairs in the region, have noted the rise of post-war nationalism in Croatia which suggests that not all outsiders see the country as being on the path to stable government (Ashdown and Holdbrooke, 2008).

Two prominent Serbs based in Vukovar echo the sentiments expressed by the NGO workers above with regards to the relationship between Croatia, the EU and the 'international community'. Vojislav Stanimirović, the leader of the Independent Serbian Democratic Party (SDSS) which claims to represent Croatian Serbs and which has its headquarters in Vukovar, agrees that Croatia represents itself in ways very different to the actual situation. When asked if the Croatian national government is deliberately attempting to mislead the international community, replies, 'yes, absolutely. Croatia is a Catholic country and they have lots of support from the Vatican and Germany' (I35, 2008).

A Serbian Orthodox priest in Vukovar, Jovan Radivojevic states, 'my message to you and your country and to the EU is that the Serbs are not as they are shown to be'. Serbs are totally misrepresented, he says. 'We only want peace, and to work in peace'. Against the tide of misrepresentation he asks for genuine communication:



'I want you to take my message to the organisation you're coming from and not take out any quotes. I wish a peaceful life for all the people of the world, regardless of ethnicity. What caused all those problems is that love faded, love for God and love for people' (I37, 2008).

The problem identified by these individuals is that a narrative has been developed which portrays Croatia as a country which has successfully managed a complex and bloody transition from war to peace, from communist to capitalist, from authoritarian to democratic, but which fails to adequately address the continuation of minority discrimination in places like Vukovar. The point raised by the Orthodox priest Radivojevic is key here; Croatia is presented as 'perfect' whilst the Serbs – in Serbia rather than in Croatia – remain international pariahs. This is why he speaks so passionately in favour of reassessing accepted opinions regarding Serbs.

Scepticism towards the international community is not confined to those who are fearful of ethnic tensions being obscured. The same fear is apparent in those who have greater concerns:

'We think that if we join the EU like this it will all just disappear, no one will talk about that, and if they do talk about that it won't be their primary work. I talked to one doctor in '92 and she said, do you remember the Vietnam war, it was 20 years ago and we are still looking for 20,000 people, so don't expect anything' (I44, 2009).

The passage comes from Manda Potko, a leading member of an NGO called the Mothers of Vukovar, who focus on finding the bodies of missing persons. Her concern is that membership of the European Union may overshadow the work of her organisation as new items come onto the policy agenda. The finding of missing persons is a highly politicised issue in Croatia, but like all political issues it is subject to public attention.

For individuals like Manda Potko the EU represents not an emancipatory ideal, as Linklater suggest, but a danger to the work of her organisation. The threat is that as 'Europe' becomes the new obsession in Croatia attempts will be made to



move the past ever further away from the present. For individuals still looking for the bodies of their loved ones, therefore, the EU does not represent the promise of security. The changing political landscape represents a threat to the peace of mind of individuals such as Manda Potko, and thousands like her, and so in this sense the European Union can be seen as a source of insecurity. Such a view supports critiques of Linklater's reliance on institutional frameworks for emancipatory processes which have been made elsewhere (Kveinen, 2002).

Yet there is tension here. Stanimirović concedes that the international community is the best hope for the Serbian minority cause in Croatia (I35, 2008). Charles Tauber believes the international community should have pushed Croatia harder to deal with its traumatized population, which suggest for all his dismay regarding the conduct of UN forces he too believes in the capacity of 'the international' to bring about change (I28, 2008). One NGO mentioned above, Europe House, was founded by a Serbian activist to prepare Vukovar for European integration, believing that Europe carried with it the hope of progress for the local population and for the country as a whole (I1, 2008).

One final core aspect of the settlement to consider is the economy. The settlement was built upon Croatia becoming a liberal democratic state, as chapter three argued, and part entails the development of a capitalist market economy. Here too, many challenges remain. The shoe factory in Borovo, just outside Vukovar but pivotal to the city's economy, was everything to those who worked there, according to an Evangelical pastor in Vukovar, Laszlo Nemeth. The factory gave people meaning to their lives, he adds (I38, 2008). The destruction of the factory and the lack of industry in the city is a major source of local dissatisfaction with the 'post-



war'. The ruins of the factory serve as a constant reminder of what had been a thriving city.

One NGO worker from another Vukovar based NGO, Youth Peace Group Danube (YPGD) argues that Vukovar is too expensive, that unemployment is too high and that, crucially, there has been no overall economic strategy (I5, 2008). The emphasis here then is not so much on the economic situation itself but more on the lack of government action. Nena Arvaj of Centre for Peace Osijek argues that more jobs are needed for the economy to develop, but that the local population in Vukovar were so traumatised the government were too afraid to invest in the area (I15, 2008). The new mayor of Vukovar took office in the spring of 2009 to inherit no investment plans and a sizable budget deficit (I33, 2009).

Regarding unemployment, Charles Tauber argues there are no reliable figures. Official reports suggest it stands at 30%, although he believes it could be as high as 60% (I23, 2008). Furthermore, substantial economic opportunities for Vukovar were lost when potential investors saw how corrupt local politics were (I24, 2008). The industry is no longer in Vukovar to provide jobs, argues Tauber, and the political condition of the city will continue to dissuade investors (I25, 2008). Radivojevic, the Serbian Orthodox priest in Vukovar, describes how the youth in the city have little to do each day except sit in cafes; for him, this is a bigger problem for the city than any ethnic divisions (I37, 2008). It is important to note, however, that studies investigating the link between the economic development programmes and reconciliation in Vukovar have raised doubts over the extent to which economic recovery equates social harmony, arguing that 'community reconciliation is an essential element of sustainable development' in the local area (Singer, 2005, p. 220).



What this section has attempted to do is to challenge the idea of 'settlement' in Vukovar by addressing the core means through which the settlement was to be delivered. The legal framework instilled by the settlement has not prevented continued cases of discrimination against minorities, or forms of 'unjust exclusion' to use Linklater's terms. For example, Amnesty International have identified Vukovar as a priority area for addressing the lack of progress made in the prosecution of war crimes committed by Croatian soldiers against Serbian civilians (Amnesty International, 2008).

Challenges have also been made to the UN, which considers the region around Vukovar to be an example of successful peacebuilding. The idea of Europe and the role of the EU can be seen as contested and problematical to many. Economic growth which was supposed to partner liberal democratic norms has not emerged. The settlement can be seen as partial in these ways, which raises questions regarding the relationship between emancipatory norms and actual practices. The implication is that the settlement has failed Vukovar in important ways which raised questions regarding the emergence of 'top-down' emancipatory processes which rely on the institutionalisation of dialogic principles.

### *Division in Vukovar*

This section will trace the contested legacy of the war to a local level by exploring understandings of Vukovar as a 'divided' place and analysing apparent manifestations of the 'division' in key settings such as local politics, schools and churches. This section further challenges the notion of the 'post-war' settlement by showing how some individuals understand Vukovar as profoundly unsettled in terms of social and political relations.



There are people who live and work in Vukovar for whom the city is a divided place. Ljiljana Gehrecke, the President of Vukovar based NGO Europe House, sees at least two communities in the city, Croat and Serb, and although she sees the situation in Vukovar as having improved, for her it is still divided (I1, 2008). Gehrecke asserts that many people in Vukovar believe the problems of the city would disappear if the Serbian population left, although for her, 'that wouldn't solve anything – the problems are inside' (I2, 2009).

The problems Gehrecke speaks of are not merely about finance. She makes a more ambiguous claim that the Croatian government 'made from Vukovar a symbol of being a victim, suffering, war crimes, and there is that kind of atmosphere here and it's not letting us go forward, so finance is no good then'. Vukovar needs to be released from the burden of the past, she argues. Nor is the divisiveness in Vukovar an outcome of law as Gehrecke believes that the laws in Croatia are good for all citizens including minorities. In practice, however, she believes that emotions have an important role to play in discriminating against the Serbian minority; 'in practice the Serbian minority is discriminated (against) although they have more rights than any other minority, but in practice they can't fight emotions' (I3, 2009). The nature of ethnic division in Vukovar is characterised by Srdan Antic as follows:

'It seems like I don't belong anywhere because there are only two options, to be Serb or Croat. If you want to be neutral you are a traitor of your own national group' (I10, 2008).

Division is bound to identity which rests upon ethnic differences. The powerful moral force attached to ethnic identity makes any formulation of alternative identities difficult because ethnicity is seen to be the key factor in determining other identity traits. In this environment 'people who work in the NGO sector are marked as some kind of traitor', he believes. He has heard that despite his parents living in



Vukovar and having grown up in the city he is seen as an 'Ustashe' by fellow Serbs, a reference to the murderous Second World War regime in Croatia led by a Croat, Ante Pavelić. To some fellow Serbs, then, his working for an NGO is considered a betrayal of his ethnic group. To Croats, however, the fact he is Serbian implies he is also a Serbian nationalist (I11, 2009).

Antić's view of ethnicity and division is that there are two distinct communities within Vukovar which are based upon ethnicity. He sees everything as being divided in the city: cafes, beaches on the Danube river; schools, recreational clubs, sports events, in hospital and in associations for disabled people. This is linked to the framework of rights instilled after the war, he believes, which by ensuring minority rights also institutionalised ethnic difference. Such conflicts are everyday, he believes, and occur 'in every point of social meeting'. Crimes which are unrelated to ethnicity, such as those involving drug smuggling across the border, are presented through the media as ethnic conflicts also. 'When you have a divided community everything can be presented like this', Antić remarks (I11, 2009).

Another NGO worker, Snježana Kovačević of Centre for Peace, Osijek, replies when asked if Vukovar is a divided city, 'totally, completely...one would think that as time passes things would change...for instance the secondary schools, and you see the professors in the staff room are totally divided' (I14, 2008). Her colleague, Nena Arvaj, describes the situation in the city as 'two worlds' who are both opposed to reconciliation. For the reconciliation programme they run together almost all the participants are drawn from Vukovar. People in the city have problems sharing there, they observe, because 'it's obviously divided'. Nena argues that 'in Vukovar there is still a struggle for power and influence among Serbs and Croats, in politics and in the community' (I15, 2008). Snježana adds, 'once you get



into Vukovar you know that the whole city is segregated. If you go to a cafe you just know if it's a Serbian café and visa-versa' (I16, 2008). She does not specify exactly how it is known that certain places are ethnically divided, but it is possible she could have been referring to imagery such as flags and posters which appear in many cafes, to the accents of customers or to the reputations of particular establishments.

The Evangelical pastor in Vukovar, Laszlo Nemeth, confirmed this view, describing how coffee shops in Vukovar are ethnically divided. Laszlo Nemeth also argues there is too much emphasis on Croatian heroism (I38, 2008). Another NGO worker from a different organisation, Peace Centre Vukovar, observes that the divisions in Vukovar are also obvious from any analysis of everyday life and from the media. 'They succeeded in reconstructing the buildings but not society', says a member of Peace Centre Vukovar. Inter-ethnic problems still prevail (I20, 2008). The official definition of identity in Vukovar is disabling argues Charles Tauber, and it leads to what he terms 'disfunctionality' (I23, 2008). For Tauber, it is a 'tragedy' that after 14 years there is still little interaction between ethnic communities (I31, 2009).

Srdan Antic is of the view that many people in Vukovar do not speak out in public to be critical of their own ethnic group because every part of life in Vukovar is connected to ethnicity. There is a great deal of personal and professional risk involved, he believes, in being open (I10, Srdan). Snježana Kovačević of Centre for Peace, Osijek agrees with this analysis, saying that 'nobody dares open up the conflict, to confront the problems, to sit and talk about it'. The wounds are still there from the war, she believes, it is just nobody knows how to deal with them in everyday life. What is needed is a place where people could come to discuss their



problems relating to the war and to take concrete steps to resolve them, 'just a place where they could sit down and negotiate' (I14, 2008).

One story recounted by Srdan Antic was that of a Croatian soldier who had been rescued by a Serbian priest. The man's friends teased him for this supposed humiliation. Regardless of this, however, a petition was started to lobby the Croatian government in support of providing the Serb with a pension. According to Srdan, if you ask locals about this they will say no, even though the story was widely reported in newspapers. 'The positive things that have survived the war are not welcome in our society', he says of the incident (I10, 2008).

The term 'ghetto' is even used to describe ethnic relations in the city. 'I have memories of a city which was not divided', says Srdan Antic, 'I remember a city where 23 registered nations lived in harmony, not in the ghetto' (I11, 2009). 'I know people who say we should be mixed and live like we did before the war, but not yet and they send their kids to Serbian schools, like my father in law', says a local resident of mixed ethnicity. 'My wife is Serb and her sister goes to Serbian school. I don't have anything against Serbian culture, Serbian language, anything, but they made a ghetto' (I48, 2009).

It is not only civil society groups who see Vukovar as a divided place. Vojislav Stanimirović, the leader of the SDSS which represents the Serbian minority in Croatia, shares the NGO view of a divided city. He blames the Croats for the division of the city because of their reluctance to discuss the future of the city and their continued focus on the war (I35, 2008). Local religious leaders also see the city as divided. Zlatko Spehar, a Catholic priest, believes the city remains divided because Serbs don't want to send their children to school (I36, 2008). For the Serbian Orthodox priest however Serbs are still marginalised in Vukovar. The



media are also a big problem in Croatia according to Jovan Radivojevic, because they are always trying to keep the levels of tension high (I37, 2008).

Another religious leader in Vukovar, Laszlo Nemeth, remembers that when he first came to Vukovar in 2004 he was asked which nation he would reach out to. When he replied that he would reach out to all nations in Vukovar, he was told that would be impossible (I38, 2008). Another story illustrates the nature and impact of division upon everyday life:

‘When I first came back I was really hurt but I have some relations with the Orthodox church now, and I said hi to one lady who I work with for 20 years and she said she doesn’t know me, as she stayed here in the war, and I was really hurt by that’ (I44, 2009).

A student of Serbian origin states that in Croatia Vukovar is seen as a city of heroes, but in Serbia the city is seen as Croatian territory. He does not feel at home in Vukovar, although he was born and raised there. ‘Some people insist on very small differences between Serbs and Croats, the language is one example – we understand perfectly what we want to say’. Many false divisions have been set up between Croats and Serbs, he adds (I49, 2008). It has also been noted by some that places which were deeply damaged during the war such as Vukovar are particularly susceptible to hate speech within the press, as editors and journalists are more inclined to stress ethnic background regardless of the offence (Southeast European Media Journal, online resource, 2010).

The discussion above supports the notion of Vukovar as a divided city, which in turn gives credence to the notion of a partial settlement. The extent to which this is true is hotly contested by some. The Mayor of Vukovar, Zeljko Sabo, who was elected in 2009, disagrees with much of the analysis above. ‘What happened here is glorious, magnificent’, he proclaimed of the successful reintegration of the region



into Croatia. 'In all the evil that happened this is the best example, peaceful reintegration, it didn't happen in Uganda or Rwanda', he argues. Although he accepts that it remains an open question as to how long it will take to live as the city did before the war, what happened in Vukovar after the war is 'glorious'. Asked if Vukovar is as divided as the NGOs suggest, he replies:

'No, that's nonsense, that person is probably writing such things for the sponsors to get money for programmes, the proof of that is when peaceful reintegration started, the two sides started living as normal people, and not a single incident between them was reported in the papers, there have been no big incidents, so there is peace now. So the city of Vukovar proved that we deserve to enter the network of cities, cities of peace, and to be a leader not only in Croatia but in the wider region, to show people that it is possible to live in peace after the war'.

Vukovar is 'the best example of peace', he argues, and he sees the city as on a par with Hiroshima and Dresden in terms of their symbolic status. Only one problem remains in Vukovar, he believes, and that is the missing persons (I33, 2009).

A member of the local government from the rightwing HDZ party agrees with the view of the mayor, even though they are from separate parties. 'Thanks to the wisdom of the Croatian government and international community we came back peacefully so this part was peacefully reintegrated', he argues, saying of the ethnically mixed local government that 'cooperation in the council was satisfying and there were no difficulties, we always had lots of cooperation, acting in unison in the important decisions that were made for the city'. Vukovar is a success story, he adds, saying, 'we are proud that Croatia is one of the most peaceful cities in Croatia and there are no incidents like there are in other cities'. The fact that political parties cooperate in Vukovar shows how tolerant the post-war society is, he suggests. Regarding the NGO view of a divided city, he says 'that would be a tragedy. I think



the reintegration went well and it's still going well. Our task is to not let this city get divided' (I34, 2008).

Even Jovan Radivojevic, who sees the Serb minority as marginalised, also implies that divisiveness is more ambiguous than a simple Croat/Serb split in the city:

'I don't see it that way. If it was ethnically divided there would be something in between, Serbs on the left and Croats on the right. There are Croatia coffee places where Serbs go and on the other side as well'.

He recounts that when his father, a Serb, was ill, he was visited in hospital by Croats as well as Serbs, and Croats came to the funeral when he died also. 'This proves they are people', he says, 'why should we divide them into Serbs or Croats?' Even so, ethnic relations in Vukovar are 'unsettled', he argues (I37, 2008). For Snježana Kovačević, Vukovar is different to other places in Croatia. 'Whatever is normal here or in the rest of the world is not in Vukovar', she argues, adding, 'Vukovar is a special case, nobody is really there for awaken it' (I14, 2008).

What this points to is that it might not be appropriate to speak of a 'divided community', as is the temptation. It is perhaps more accurate to accept that alongside narratives and evidence of division, there are also understandings of a different kind which, to use Radivojevic's term, sees ethnic relations in the city as 'unsettled' but not divided. What is clear, however, is that the supposed settlement is still open to contestation. This is particularly the case among the NGOs working in Vukovar. Having set out the ways in which the nature of 'division' in Vukovar is understood, this section will proceed to address three concrete areas of city life in which the ambiguous nature of division plays out. As with the material presented so far, the arguments here are led by the interview material.



The first is local politics. Local politics is identified by NGO workers in particular as contributing to the problems faced by Vukovar. Pointing to the 500,000 war veterans in Croatia, staff at the Vukovar based NGO Youth Peace Group Danube argue that politicians stay in power by maintaining divisions; 'they have to keep them happy', one says in relation to how politicians treat veterans (I5, 2008). Veterans provide important political capital to politicians; 'they are buying their voters'. Government is not seen as being for people, 'they don't see that it's for local citizens' (I9, 2009). The political environment makes it difficult to be independently minded and efforts by NGOs to contribute towards a strategy for local economic growth have been met with derision by local political elites; 'you give suggestions but they are laughing, because he gets his salary every month, and nobody will say' (I5, 2008). Dogma and points scoring characterise local Vukovar politics (I9, 2009).

However, what may pass as points scoring in public does not characterise politics behind closed doors, argues Srđan Antić of the Nansen Dialogue Centre. Local politicians cooperate well there, he believes, 'because they have a common interest in keeping power – they need each others'. Keeping citizens divided – keeping them in a 'ghetto' - is good for politicians, he argues. He believes a secret agreement exists to maintain the notion of division particularly around election times in order to mobilise their ethnically determined constituencies. People are hired to serve in the local administration in order to satisfy quota regulations ensuring that the correct proportion of ethnic groups are employed, yet they have to be members of a political party in order to be considered, they have to be 'our Serbs', in his words. This does not stop NGOs such as Nansen attempting to work with local government, but such attempts tend to fail; 'they are always trying to avoid it, not



saying yes, not saying no, because of the agreement to keep the divisions. There is no ideology', he adds, 'just the need to take power.' The relationship between local politicians is, he believes, 'a closed circle'. Within the local government he believes 'there is no honest interest to support reconciliation; there is only the interest of the politicians, not of the ethnic groups who live here' (I11, 2009). One interpretation by a YPGD worker refers to a loss of identity which makes political manipulation easier:

'The main problem is they (the Croatian government) cannot decide what to do with the heritage of the Second World War and this ex-Yugoslav war, this story about Partisans and Ustashe, it's all the time in newspapers, somehow I think that Croatia is lost a bit after Yugoslavia...they can't find the basic thing and where we will build something. Here you still have mess. Then it's always easy to play with people, nasty tricks. Like a small child searching for its identity' (I5, 2008).

For Srđan Antić the divisions within the city and the 'nasty tricks' played upon local citizens are not inevitable but the product of deliberate political strategies which amount to 'a democratic form of ethnic cleansing'. The end of the war did not bring about the end of ethnic cleansing, but rather a new form of it (I10, 2008). 'Very often Vukovar is considered as an example of reconciliation', says a member of Peace Centre Vukovar, 'but there is still manipulation' (I21, 2008). Charles Tauber simply sees all local politics in Vukovar as corrupt (I2, 2008).

The newly elected mayor of the city, Zeljko Sabo, agrees with the analysis. 'It's clear now that the Serbian SDSS and Croatian HDZ (two nationalist parties in the local administration) were in a secret agreement', he argues, 'and in the media they say "we the Serbs" and then they make an agreement to fight for a while'. Local politicians pursued this approach to deliberately return the minds of voters to the war in order to disguise the lack of planning for the future of Vukovar, he



believes. 'If they stop talking about the conflict they have to show their programmes, what they did. They have very little to show'. Instead of looking to the future, 'the only thing they can do is to awaken that hatred and fear. Croats say "we defended you" and the Serbian parties say "we defended you against Croats". It's a circle. It's also political marketing. They're writing messages on buildings and houses' (I32, 2009). Sabo himself does not think this contributes to the city being 'divided', however, as is clear from statements made by NGO workers such as Srdan Antic others draw different conclusions.

Jovan Radivojevic, a Serbian Orthodox priest in the Vukovar, replies when asked if the national government in Croatia discriminates against Serbs, 'officially not, but that's part of it. You can see this, you don't have to be too smart' (I37, 2008). Laszlo Nemeth, the Evangelical pastor, sees Croatian democracy as childlike and believes that many people in Croatia see democracy as an opportunity to get rich, particularly on a local level (I38, 2008). Another view of the national scene is that some Serbian politicians in Croatia are causing problems by advocating a separate state for Croatian Serbs (I43, 2009). A further view held by one NGO worker at YPGD is that the Croatia diaspora contributes to the division in Vukovar. 'I think nationalism is very strong', she argued, 'you have a little group but they are very strong, they get money from outside, Australia' (I5, 2008). Others doubt the capacity of local government to deliver:

'I think it is imaginary and artificial, what Sabo (the mayor) said. They don't have a programme really, they don't have a solution for jobs, they don't have anything. I'm not talking about state government, but local government, they can't do anything. They don't make decisions locally, only thing they can decide is for the parking lot or something. It's a very authoritarian party (the HDZ), coming from the centre' (I48, 2009).



A second key site in which the ambiguous nature of division can be seen in Vukovar is that of the school system and the experiences of young people in general. Education in Vukovar is highly problematic for many civil society actors. Ethnic segregation, in which Croats and non-Croats, mainly Serbs, use the same school building but at different times and with different teachers, is the main problem (I22, 2008). One employee of YPGD who is a youth worker highlights the central problem of the education system in Vukovar which is that because the schools are segregated consequently young people do not meet each other very often. Another employee points out the lack of government action, saying that 'the local government are not doing anything for the youth' (I6, 2009). This feeds into a common theme emerging from the sources which is that government is seen as contributing to the problems in Vukovar by either propagating division or failing to act in ways which promote unity.

Another opinion from within YPGD is that the younger generation is being heavily influenced by growing up in the shadow of their parents who survived the war. 'Youngsters are even more nationalistic than older generations', he argues, adding 'kids in primary schools hear stories like we heard about partisans and Germans'. The same employee also criticises the education system in Croatia, describing it as 'terrible, because they don't teach us how to be creative' (I9, 2009). There is not enough focus on youth in Vukovar and little to keep them in the city (I38, 2008).

The NGO which has most engagement with the local education system in Vukovar is the Nansen Dialogue Project, which for several years has advocated the founding of a mixed schooling system to replace the existing segregated system. According to Srdan Antic, one of the leaders of the project,



**'the system of education is divided and is based on an agreement between Serbian and Croatian (local) politicians' (I10, 2008).**

**In an analysis similar to that made by Ljiljana Gehrecke regarding the legal framework for minorities in Croatia, Antic believes that Croatia offers a high standard of minority education based upon the European Charter of Human Rights, but that this educational framework is not implemented in Vukovar because the city is 'different'. During the period of 'peaceful reintegration' immediately after the war, school segregation seemed logical, he argues, but with years gone by since the war it is now time to encourage mixed schools. Research conducted by the Nansen Dialogue Centre found that 78% of parents in Vukovar were ready to send their children to mixed schools, with only 'those who have had some tragic experience' opposing. So, what accounts for the continuation of segregation?**

**For Srdan Antic, the answer is straightforward: local politicians who wish to perpetuate ethnic divisions in Vukovar in order to cultivate an electoral base to maintain their hold on power. As he puts it, 'if you are raising a child to be a Serb, not to be a human, then you are raising a voter'. Antic argues that ethnic politics and education are intimately bound by the legacy of the war which reproduces the ethnic categories of moral difference which the war re-entrenched. 'These kind of schools are producing enemies', he argues, 'this kind of divisiveness is unnatural'. Students who share the same school building but who take classes according to ethnicity leave insulting messages and graffiti for each other, according to Srdan, and there are lots of fights and student strikes. Cleaners have to wash away the graffiti before journalists see it' (I10, 2008). In one kindergarten, there are separate entrances for Croats and Serbs (I11, 2009).**



Snježana Kovačević of Centre for Peace, Osijek, recalls some research commissioned by her NGO in conjunction with the University of California, Berkley, which found that parents had not been consulted over whether or not the schools should be segregated. The research also found that parents in Vukovar preferred to have mixed schools, but that Serbian teachers wanted to maintain their positions in schools (I16, 2008). Significantly, one parent who is also the President of an NGO tasked with ensuring the memory of the Croatian dead lives on, the Widows of Vukovar, agrees. 'We want the same schools, no division', she says. 'I think we have to cross that barrier. The war doesn't matter, and our kids associate in bars anyway' (I45, 2009). Not all parents take the same view. According to one resident:

'Even the kids who are ten or fifteen now, they were born in 1991, they don't have to do with that, even if they are nationalists, they hate Croats or Serbs, they didn't do anything, even people my age (25) who have kids, they're laying that burden on their kids which is really not fair' (I48, 2009).

A third arena in which the ambiguous nature of division can be seen to play out is in the religious communities of the city. One perspective which falls outside the powerful Croatian Catholic/Serbian Orthodox dichotomy is that of Laszlo Nemeth, a Hungarian Evangelical pastor based at a small church in Vukovar. The two larger churches are engaged in serious opposition to one another, he argues. 'Let's hate the other nation because as long as we have a common enemy you will come to us', is how he characterises their position. 'It's kind of like politics, just in church politics. They are spreading the hatred. You can touch the hatred' (I49, 2008).

Public cooperation is superficial, he argues, saying that 'on the surface they are trying to do ecumenical stuff, but at the bottom they don't like each other – they don't do anything together'. Mutual hatred is communicated between the two faiths,



and those who attempt to articulate alternative understandings are removed. This happened to one Catholic priest who wanted Catholic and Orthodox communities to cooperate more. Ultimately, Nemeth argues, religious leaders are more important than democratically elected politicians in Vukovar among congregations (I38, 2008). His views are confirmed by a young Serbian student living in Vukovar. 'Those kind of borders, Catholicism and Orthodox', he explains, 'are really felt here' (I49, 2008).

### *The Human Impact of War*

This final section explores the continuing human impact of the war by addressing themes such as forgiveness, trust, victimhood, war crimes, memory and loss. The purpose of this section will be to attempt an understanding of how the experience of insecurity in the past shapes living in the present long after apparent settlements have been drawn up. This raises questions about the linkage between institutions and security made by Linklater, as well as upholding Booth's scepticism towards the state as an agent of security.

This section seeks to develop the point that Linklater's work, and to a certain extent Booth's, fails to grasp the human impact of insecurity because their engagement with empirical analysis is limited. Linklater's empirical analysis is confined to very general, broad statements about 'moral resources', whilst Booth's empirical engagement, whilst apparently much more involved than Linklater's, is limited by the Welsh School framework which reifies the idea of global civil society at the expense of the very local voices he seeks to defend. What happens, then, when those who have experienced insecurity speak with their own voices? This section seeks to probe this issue.



At the heart of the issues being addressed here is the act of violence itself. Wars and battles are collective efforts, but the actual cause of personal suffering is the single impact of the bullet or bomb. To consider the Battle of Vukovar in late 1991 as an experience of insecurity for the people of Vukovar would be accurate, yet the picture remains incomplete if the individual is lost. It is more a matter of considering the man who was killed in his garden by a mortar round and could not be buried for days because of the heavy shelling, and whose children eventually crawled from their cellar to move his body. Or the woman left with only the photographs of the home where she raised her children, the house itself in ruins, the father looking for the body of his son, or the widow telling her child stories of his heroic father. To bury such experiences beneath an ontological category like the Battle of Vukovar seems to inflict another act of violence upon them.

Once the act of violence has taken place the survivors attempt to find meaning in the genuine sense of loss they feel. They construct and adopt the notion of war crimes and apply it to the violence. They might consider themselves as victims. Both are political outcomes which involve a process of othering. In many cases the result is a loss of trust in the other, with anger, resentment and a desire for revenge or at least justice simmering below the surface of social and political relations. Forgiveness for the act of violence becomes an endpoint many feel they should reach but cannot. In these ways the impact of war continues long after the formal settlement. For individuals the very notion of settlement, of security even, is not only intricately bound up with the act of violence in the past, it is also associated with a distant understanding of peace in the future.

Individuals are caught between the violence of the past and the desire for security in the future. Bill McSweeney's understanding of security as relational, as



each finding security the other – the image of the mother and child – comes to the fore here, but the true meaning of security in this sense only becomes apparent when the relationship is broken in the act of violence (McSweeney, 1999). The human impact of war, then, is to break the relationships to family, home, employment, which had until that point been understood as secure. Loss is central to this.

In Vukovar the sense of loss, and subsequently insecurity, is deeply felt among those who are still looking for the bodies of their loved ones. ‘I am still looking for my husband’ says Manda Potko of the Mothers of Vukovar (I42, 2008). She has been looking since late 1991, when he disappeared as the city fell. ‘Around 70 people have been found this year (2009), Serbian and Croatian nationalities’, she says, ‘and we’re still looking for 480 from this county and the city itself is looking for 350. From all the country from 1991 we are looking for 1041 and 800 from 1995’ (I44, 2009). Those who have been found are remembered explicitly, as their names are inscribed on tombstones, in museums and in the publications available at large memorial sites (leaflets at the Ovchara site carry the names of all those killed and buried there). Indictments of suspected war criminals specifically name the persons supposedly killed by the accused, so that a direct responsibility for their deaths is attributed to them. For example, the list of all 254 persons killed at Ovchara are published as an annex attached to the indictment of Slobodan Milosevic.

It may well be true that as the missing remain so, the distinction between missing and dead begins to blur, as was noted by scholars seeking to understand another traumatic event, 9/11 (see Miller, 2005). But those who are still missing are only remembered as such, and to those who are still looking there is a world of difference between missing and found, which makes the notion of settlement – for the living and the dead – difficult to attain. Some have speculated that the 2010



election of a new and moderate Croatian President, Ivo Josipovic, may thaw relations with Serbia which could have an impact on the campaign to find missing persons (Bancroft, 2010). Yet it is only with the certainty of knowing that settlement can be achieved.

The state supports their work in principle, but affording the complicated scientific analysis which accompanies the discovery of a new grave in the area is always a problem. One DNA analysis alone costs 8000 Kunas, or £900 (I43, 2009). According to a pamphlet distributed by the Mothers of Vukovar, 'this search is sad and it hurts, but it does not allow us to give up until we know the truth. However, the HOPE has remained. It keeps us alive' (Associations of Families of Missing and Violently Detained Persons of Vukovar, date unknown).

For those who have found their loved ones and who have a grave to mark their loss, a degree of finality exists but the security of the living relationship remains lost. For some of these people one of the most important duties they feel they have is 'to keep the memory' alive, as put by Vesna Katić, President of the Widows of Vukovar. 'Our emotions are still very mixed', she adds. 'Everyone has their own stories of the war' (I45, 2009). Staff with YPGD agree that the memory of the war is being kept alive:

'We have so many organisations connected to the war. I go to lots of places and they are all there...listen to *my* story' (I9, 2009).

This particular interviewee regards the process of storytelling as important for some, such as those who have lost close relatives, but she finds the frequent retelling of war stories by soldiers in the press unnecessary (I9, 2009).



Interpretations of the war are informed by the inherent subjectivity of violence itself. The subjective nature of the experience leads to disagreements over how the war should be interpreted. Debates about the immediate past influence the future direction of social relations in Vukovar. One illustrative debate here is that between two of the religious leaders, Zlatko Spehar and Jovan Radivojevic, Croatian Catholic and Serbian Orthodox priests respectively, concerning the violence of the war and the possibility of forgiveness. Spehar, when interviewed, was reluctant to forgive those he saw as the perpetrators of violence:

'Who is the aggressor? They attack your house and steal your possessions. Who is to blame? The day the Serbs chose to attack was the day Croatian children were coming back from school, when the Serb children had already left on 23 August, they attacked on 25 August, so they were waiting for the Croatian children to come. That's a crime, they planned that'.

Spehar recalls the infamous 'Memorandum' produced by the Serbian Academy of Social Sciences which advocated a greater Serbia, which he sees as clear evidence of Serbian intentionality (see Cohen, 1996). 'Those are the facts', he says. 'You can't forgive someone who doesn't ask for forgiveness'. Such opinions are built upon his own experiences of the war as well as those of others – most likely members of his own large congregation, given that mass is well attended on a weekly basis and particularly during festivals such as Easter (the author attended one such service, when approximately five hundred worshipers gathered in the reconstructed interior of the Church of St. Philip and Jacob). He recounts one such story:

'There's an old lady and 7 people were killed in front of her. She had to watch her husband and kids die. Her neighbours did that, she said they were good neighbours and their children went to school together, then the Chetniks...She says she is praying for the strength to forgive them. That's the power of the Catholic Church. If the church wasn't here in Vukovar there would be a war. One Serbian lady said to Croat returnees, "what kind of people are you - if you did to us what we did to you we would kill you". We're not murderers - we defended the city. One man was injured by a bomb



and he was escaping the city on the last bus in '91, a priest asked him "do you hate?" He said no. He was 19. The priest said, "do you forgive", he said, "I can't father. I can't. I can't forgive them. They destroyed my city, murdered my relatives. I can't forgive them. I'm not born to kill but to live'.

According to Spehar, the, Croatians do not have to ask for forgiveness. He looks to a foreign precedent to support his case. 'Should England ask Scotland or India for forgiveness? Did England do that? We weren't aggressors, we were defenders, there's a big difference', he argues (I36, 2008).

When Spehar's view is taken to Radivojevic, the Serbian Orthodox priest in Vukovar, the notion that Serbs should ask Croats to forgive them for the acts of wartime violence is not met with sympathy. 'I never heard the Croats ask for forgiveness for Jasenovac and other concentration camps', he says, a reference to the infamous Croatian concentration camps of the Second World War where thousands of Serbs were killed. Such views were echoed in comments made by Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic, who compared the destruction of Vukovar to the ethnic cleansing undertaken by Croatian soldiers of Serbian areas in the latter stages of the 1991-95 war (Radio Free Europe, online resource, 2008). Radivojevic does, however, suggest a less divisive approach to the question of forgiveness, saying that both Croats and Serbs should apologise for crimes committed during the war. However, 'it's easy to apologise but it has to come from the heart' (I37, 2008). The point here is that on the basis of the views of these two religious leaders the partial nature of the settlement becomes clearer.

The scale of the task facing those who want to create spaces in which forgiveness can be considered is illustrated by another story from the Evangelical pastor in Vukovar, Laszlo Nemeth. A woman in his church saw eight people burned to death. She was beaten and forced to watch it. The woman remains a member of



the church congregation but has difficulty saying the words 'Our Father'. She prays for forgiveness, Nemeth notes, but she still hates the Serbs. 'It's a process of reconciliation', he says, 'most are ok, some are ok just on the surface' (I38, 2008). NGOs play a part in this process. Ljiljana Gehrecke of Europe House recounts a story involving a local Catholic priest:

'I went to a Catholic priest and said "I'm sorry, I need you to forgive me". He said "I can't forgive you", and I said, "what did Jesus say about how many times you should forgive?" And he said, "forgive, forget and then you go to Ovcar". You get killed because of forgiveness. He was a Catholic priest. I told him, "Father, I am a lot older than you and I forgave a lot of times in my life and I never felt sorry"' (I2, 2009).

Others manage this process on their own. War veteran Mato Dudić provides a case in point:

'They (NGOs) teach us that we need to forgive because Jesus forgave those who killed him. Our Leader (of the church) said we can't forgive if they don't ask for forgiveness, but they don't have to ask me, I have to ask for myself, I have to forgive for myself, because of myself, because I am. Hatred is eating me inside; it doesn't harm anyone that I hate, so I forgive my enemies. I forgive' (I39, 2009).

It may well be that such examples are rare. This is certainly the opinion of Snježana Kovačević, of Centre for Peace, Osijek. 'Whatever they can do they can only forget, forgive if they have enough resources', she says. 'or they can just go on hating the other nationality and hate the rest of the world for what a few individuals did' (I14, 2008). To meet the act of violence with anger, then, is easier than to forgive.

Citizens in Vukovar who have more positive attitudes towards members of other ethnic groups and who are more able to admit that all sides committed war crimes during the conflict are more open to reconciliation; it is not the experience of trauma itself which determines attitudes to the other, but the way in which individuals manage their traumas in relation to the inevitable daily encounters with the other (Biro and Milin, 2005).



Forgiveness is of course intricately bound up with victimhood. One employee with YPGD sees the status that Vukovar has as a symbol of victimhood as related to the lack of economic growth, suggesting that 'somehow people living here are just victims all the time...trying to get things from the outside but not to learn or to create' (I5, 2008). Srdan Antic agrees with this sentiment, believing that people in the city 'are expecting that someone will come and solve their problems' (I10, 2008). Nena Arvaj of Centre for Peace Osijek sees Vukovar as a living memorial in which a mentality of 'we are victims please help us' exists (I15, 2008). Charles Tauber agrees with this analysis, asserting the view that many people in Vukovar see themselves as victims and feel helpless (I24, 2008).

Vesna Bosanac, the Director of Vukovar Hospital, also served as a witness in the trial of Slobodan Milosevic in The Hague. Perhaps surprisingly for an individual who could so easily assume an ethnically particularist perspective, being a high profile survivor of the war, she takes a universalist view of trauma and victimhood:

'Everyone needs help, everyone is traumatised, all are victims, regardless of whether they are Croat or Serb' (I40, 2008).

A similar view is offered by Laszlo Nemeth, the Evangelical pastor in Vukovar, regarding guilt:

'All of them feel guilt, for fighting or not fighting, picking sides or not picking sides, saving someone or not, leaving or not leaving, there's a lot of looking back to the past and they need to get out of that. They are living in the past' (I38, 2008).

What is interesting about these views in particular is that their universal approach to victimhood and guilt might open up universal approaches to forgiveness. If all are seen as vulnerable a more open and tolerant approach towards mutual understanding might be possible. The difficulty lies in persuading those such as Spehar, who sees



victimhood as ethnically determined, and politicians who deny the very existence of these problems, of the validity of such views.

Exacerbating these issues surrounding forgiveness and victimhood is the fact that the nature of the conflict, which was a civil war, means that everyday life in the 'post-war' period involves regular interactions with the other. One local resident described the situation as follows:

'It's like this. What if us two are forced to live together, for some reason. One day we get into a fight, I stab you, but we're still forced to live together. If you did that to me we'll probably kill each other, or we will try to forget, because maybe I was crazy at the time. But it's not really the same (I48, 2009).

Snježana Kovačević argues that the 1991-95 war left a legacy that was never properly dealt with, and no support programme was ever put in place for people to deal with the everyday problems that come about from living with those who were formally enemies. It has been noted that the return of Serbs and Croats to places such as Vukovar, where many people are traumatised and carrying emotional problems, will result in 'a climate in which hatred, distrust and vengeful desires will be very frequent emotions' (Klain, 1993, p. 117). That no structures were put in place to deal with this meant that when people saw somebody they know had been involved with the other side during the war they had to 'deal with the wounds again', Kovačević argued. She provides a story to illustrate the point:

'One Croat soldier saw a police officer giving him a parking ticket, but he recognised him from the war and remembered what he did, yet he is still wearing a police uniform. The man said "I just don't know what to say or what to do, I would just rather hate myself". He can't believe he has a pistol again!'

She adds that there is no place to make an appeal, or even to shout out, because freedom of speech is curtailed by the divisive atmosphere of the city (I14, 2008).



Charles Tauber believes this is also related to a societal communication problem and patriarchal structures which combine to limit the abilities of citizens to talk freely (I24, 2008).

Thus far this section has centred upon unsettled relationships. A discussion on war veterans focuses more on the unsettled individual. Snježana Kovačević of Centre for Peace, Osijek, says of veterans, 'the fact is that nobody is helping them out'. Their families also suffer as a result, she says, and many veterans commit suicide and commit domestic violence. The government has not done enough to help them, and there is no programme or strategy in place, although the funds have been available. Veterans are pacified by the role played by politicians since the war in honouring the memory of the war. Snježana explains that 'they give meaning to what has happened in the sense that Vukovar and the victims of Vukovar should not be forgotten, that those lost ones did not lose their life in vain, that it was worth it'. But there is little practical support for veterans apart from medical assistance the prescription of drugs. Some projects have been organised in Vukovar by groups of veterans, but they amount little more than places for socialising rather than psychological or welfare assistance (I14, 2008).

One of Snježana's colleagues at the Centre for Peace, Osijek, Nena Arvaj, agrees with her analysis. The government, she argues, provides money for veterans' organisations but she believes many of them are alcoholics. The problem is that people who are part of strong organisations, such as groups of veterans, do not think they need help (I15, 2008). Charles Tauber notes that a leader of a local veteran's organisation told him that 80% of his members had made at least one suicide attempt, although he admits that no reliable figures exist (I23, 2008). Laszlo Nemeth



asserts that when it comes to Croatian veterans, 'nobody cared and nobody cares for them' (I38, 2008).

During one fieldwork trip to Vukovar, the author encountered one veteran who would be found each night in the same bar, always drinking heavily and keen to voice his opinions, usually in a cheerful manner. He had been seventeen when the war began in 1991, and fought as one of the 'Defenders of Vukovar' before being taken prisoner. Having survived the war, he currently lives off state benefits. The affection with which he was held by other regulars in the bar was clear, as was their pride for him. The veteran gave the author an expired identification card, given to all veterans to allow them to receive their benefits, so that he would not be forgotten. The lasting impression upon the author was that the veteran embodied the loss of youth that many more would also have suffered.

There are numerous support groups for veterans in Vukovar, most of which are attached to a particular unit from the war. Mato Dudić was President of the Vukovar Retired Policeman Association which supports many veterans. A veteran himself, he was a young police officer when the war broke out and sided with the 'Defenders' of the city. 'Everyone who went through the hell of Vukovar has consequences', he says, 'but some of those became alcoholics. There is one guy who is in rehab now, and we talk to him. We try to talk to those who drink or do bad things now' (I39, 2009).

One problem is that many serving soldiers and policemen were forced to retire. 'I would have never retired if I was not forced to', Dudić says, 'I started looking for a job after that but I had to retire, there was nothing, so it would have been better if we worked'. Work, or rather the lack of it, remains a key problem for many veterans:



**'I understand that because most of us were not good in some way psychological or health so there were cases when they were making up jobs for people so they would have some work but they did nothing, they were there for nothing. It was very hard to find jobs for invalids, it's hard to find jobs for someone who is not 100% healthy, it's hard if they are healthy and even harder if they are an invalid' (I39, 2009).**

**According to a local citizen, war veterans are seen as a burden. 'On memorial day everyone says they are heroes but no one cares really' (I48, 2009). One view in support of this is offered by Charles Tauber, Director of CWWPP, who says it is difficult to get local, national or international recognition of the levels of trauma in the city. This is closely related to the high levels of drug dependence, physical illness and suicide rates in Vukovar. He considers the combinations of drugs prescribed to many people as 'weird and wonderful' brews which lead to addiction (I23, 2008).**

**Overhanging so much of the themes and relationships discussed in this section is the matter of war crimes. Srdan Antic regards the Croatian attitude regarding war criminals is that they are surrounded by them, which allows the Croats to mark out all Serbs as potential war criminals (I10, 2008). Certainly the notion of living with murderers has real purchase. 'I know war criminals are living here, it's the truth', says one local youth (I48, 2009). Revenge is still seen as legitimate by many, Antic argues (I10, 2008). For many people it is still very hard to discuss war crimes (I22, 2008). This may partly explain why prosecutions of suspected war criminals struggle to find witnesses and to obtain local cooperation.**

**Stanimirović of the SDSS party argues that Croatian crimes committed against Serbs during the war continue to be ignored,**

**'because they would have to talk about who killed those people, and those are Croatian generals, so we have to ask if that was a civil war or a war of aggression. If Croats were the only victims it was a war of aggression, but if not it was a civil war' (I5, 2008).**



Again, the debate between the two priests illustrates the point here. For the Catholic priest, Spehar,

'no one is doing their time for crimes committed in Vukovar. There are villages where lots of people were killed and nobody has been punished. Serbs destroyed everything. Vukovar was 95% destroyed. In one village Serbs planned to be recorded leaving a village by force to portray themselves as victims. There is a tape recording of a Croatian policeman giving bread and milk to a Serb woman and she killed him. You can't show me one Serb who wasn't wearing weapons. So we can't talk about innocent civilians'.

In contrast, to this,

'One Serbian soldier who was wounded was taken to the hospital by Croat forces, they didn't kill him. He was treated equally, witnesses are alive, and he accused the hospital of mistreatment' (I36, 2008).

Running counter to this however are the views of the local Serbian Orthodox priest, Jovan Radivojevic:

'I can never make peace with the idea that Serbs were the aggressors in this war; I am from Borovo, I don't agree that Serbs attacked themselves, and those policeman who came to Borovo on 2nd May had good intentions. When you come to some place with weapons you come to kill. I don't feel that Serbs caused the war (I37, 2008).

Memorials which speak of the 'Serbian aggressor' are wrong, he argues. Just as forcefully, he denies the notion that Serbs alone were to blame for crimes committed during the war:

'There are war criminals on each side. If we are looking for war criminals on one side we should also look on the other. I don't agree with the fact that only one is to blame, it takes two to fight. We are talking about Srebrenica; nobody is talking about Serbs killed in Bosnia. My mother lived in a Muslim city during the war, she was forced to leave, she had to move to a Serbian village, was living in a torn house...so there is one law for Serbs and another for the rest of the world (I37, 2008).

This relates to comments made earlier in the chapter regarding the ways in which Serbs are marginalised. Clearly, the sense among both Croats and Serbs is that crimes were committed against the other. This has led to a loss of trust which is also



characterised by ethnicity. One study has shown that feelings of helplessness, fear and lack of understanding about why the war happened were major factors that contributed to the breaking up of formally close relations. The veteran, Dudić, expresses the issue as follows:

‘It’s a matter of trust, mostly, they are separating their kids in kindergarten and school, and one example 100 metres from here was a mass grave which was relocated. So they were working on that for three days in 1991, to relocate, and I can’t believe that nobody saw what happened, that none of the neighbours saw what happened, and I say “hi” to everyone but we are not friends, we are just talking, but we’re not friendly. It’s a matter of trust’ (I39, 2009).

The same sentiment is expressed by a member of the Mothers of Vukovar, an NGO committed to searching for the bodies of the disappeared:

‘We, the small people, we don’t argue, we just doubt each other. But the ones who started the war, political people, they know more than we do. It’s like we all think, “you know where our graves are”, but they actually don’t’ (I43, 2009).

The issue is highly sensitive for people who are looking for their relative such as this, because although most local citizens will not know where the bodies are, it is almost certain that a few will. As well as the trials at The Hague for the massacre committed at Ovčara, the farm near to Vukovar where several hundred people were murdered having been taken from the hospital, there are also local trials for people accused of murder on a smaller scale. One trial of a Croatian-Serb in 2008 concerned the disappearance of five men from the hospital in Vukovar who have yet to be found (Southeast European Times, 2008). Such cases fuel the notion that members of other ethnic groups know where the missing are, but are too afraid of recrimination or prosecution to say.



## *Conclusion*

'You can't build on the new foundations', argues the Evangelical pastor Laszlo Nemeth. The possibility of another war is very real, he believes. 'They say around here that every 50 years there must be a war' (I38, 2008). According to the institutions discussed in chapter three, such as the United Nations and the European Union, the idea of Croatia sliding into war again would not seem a possibility. After all, the UN left Vukovar in 1998, confident in the legal framework it bequeathed, sure that economic and political development would lead to EU entry in the future, and subsequently to security. Settlement seemed not only possible, but already achieved.

The discussion in this chapter suggests not so much a settlement, but processes of ongoing contestation. Major differences have been identified. The idea of settlement has thus been challenged and its partiality revealed in important ways. Such a view is shared by observers based in the region. One reporter writing on the respected Belgrade news outlet B92 argued in 2006 that 'if there is a test-case for reconciliation 15 years after the Balkan wars, Vukovar is it, and the results are disappointing', citing the continuation of emotional pain and the division of public space as sources of tension (Jungvirth, online resource, 2006).

It is worth pausing here to reflect on how this chapter and the previous one relate to the wider aims of the thesis. Together they have sought to show the partial nature of the post-war settlement, and in doing so, they have revealed the insecurity of everyday life for many. By attempting to understand the settlement in Croatia, which proponents would characterise as a form of emancipation given its democratic structural underpinnings, through the lived experiences of citizens, a different and



more troubling account of post-war life emerges which is characterised by exclusion and difference. The previous chapter described the narrative of Croat victory and victimhood, but this chapter has suggested that victimhood is widespread. This is not just a consequence of the war itself; it is a consequence of a lack of communicative structures within society. On the basis of the evidence presented in this chapter and the preceding one, post-war Vukovar is not characterised by dialogic relations.

The following chapter seeks to take the thesis in a new direction. It will seek to explore the work of NGOs operating within the context discussed in this chapter and in the previous chapter. Amid the unsettled legacy of the war in Vukovar, NGOs pursue a number of strategies and goals. Their work will be the subject of the following chapter, which is also the beginning of the final section of the thesis. The final section further explores the interplay between the universal and the particular through an analysis of the emancipatory practices which take place within the local context of difference and contestation discussed in this chapter. Interviews with NGOs in Vukovar support Booth's emphasis on civil society groups as agents of emancipation. Subsequent interviews, however, challenge his view in important ways as the human limits of civil society engagement in emancipatory practices are also revealed.

However, even when such limitations are taken into account, certain civil society practices show how Booth and Linklater's respective understandings of emancipatory practice are played out in what are termed micro-dialogic communities, to be explored in chapter 8. Such practices allow individuals to explore their competing truth claims about the war in Croatia through open dialogue. These alternative dialogues open new spaces and allow dominant



understandings of the war to be subverted. The purpose of the thesis is to claim that the security as emancipation move should be understood in light of lived experiences of security and insecurity. With this in mind the discussion now turns to the work of NGOs engaged in peacebuilding in Vukovar.



## **Chapter 6**

### **Interaction, Advocacy and Struggle: The Work of NGOs in Vukovar**

#### *Introduction*

This chapter continues the empirical focus of the thesis but takes the analysis in a new direction. The previous three chapters have sought to explore the experience of insecurity in Vukovar from late 1991 onwards and to question the notion of settlement through a consideration of the legacy of war on spatial forms and societal relationships. They have argued that forms of insecurity persist in Vukovar, which in turn has implications for understandings of security as emancipation.

It is within the context of contestation and division discussed in the previous two chapters that civil society organisations emerge. This chapter seeks to detail the work of seven NGOs working in Vukovar. The chapter will use firsthand accounts drawn from semi-structured interviews with individuals who are currently working or have worked in the past for the NGOs in question to detail the practical work which is being undertaken by those organisations.

In Vukovar there have been a number of different institutions and NGOs involved in forms of 'post-war reconstruction' since the war in Croatia ended in 1995. These organisations were varied and included large international bodies such as the UN, the OSCE and international NGOs like Red Cross International. Some scholars of post-war Croatia have derided these INGOs as only reflecting the interests of the 'new globalised professional middle class' (Stubbs, 1996). Regional civil society networks and small, locally based NGOs were also active. Together these organisations show the number of ways in which peacebuilding is understood and implemented.



As the Croatian state has stabilised under the new settlement described in chapter 3, many of the large organisations left the region, yet a number of smaller NGOs still function. There are five organisations dedicated to forms of peacebuilding based in Vukovar: Europe House, Peace Centre Vukovar, Youth Peace Group Danube, PRONI and the Coalition for Work in Psychotrauma and Peace. Two other organisations, the Centre for Peace, Nonviolence and Human Rights and the Nansen Dialogue Centre are based in the nearby city of Osijek; however both organisations conduct work in Vukovar. These are the seven organisations with which this chapter is concerned. Each will be dealt with individually. The subsections will detail the mission of the organisation and the activities they pursue. They will provide a brief history of the NGO, describe the working conditions and note significant transnational connections.

The purpose of the chapter is to detail the work of key NGOs in Vukovar and to provide ‘thick’ descriptions of political activity with a view to exploring the relationship between civil society, security and emancipation more generally. In this way the chapter goes beyond a recent yet brief study of the NGOs discussed here which focused only on youth participation (Kosic and Byrne, 2009). Furthermore, that study did not consider the limitations of NGO activity as the following chapter will. Other studies have considered NGOs in other parts of Croatia but not Vukovar (Featherstone, 2000; Mitchells, 2003).

### *Youth Peace Group Danube*

Youth Peace Group Danube (YPGD) is a youth club and one of the oldest peacebuilding organisations in the city, having been founded in 1995 following the end of the war in Croatia. YPGD ‘aims to promote the development of a civil and



democratic society based on non-violent culture, ethnic tolerance and respect for human rights' (YPGD, online resource, 2009). YPGD is also a member of a transnational network, the South East Europe Youth Network (SEEYN) which aims to unite NGOs focusing on youth issues in post-war states, to promote mutual understanding and to overcome prejudice (SEEYN, online resource, 2010). Volunteer workers from abroad have assisted the work of the organisations over the years, indeed, one estimate puts the number of international volunteers at two hundred since 1995 (I5, 2008). They are one of the few NGOs to own their own building, and subsequently are in a stronger financial position than most (I6, 2009).

YPGD promotes its activities through its website but the site has not been updated since 2004 (YPGD, online resource 2010). The state of the site is indicative of a wider problem in human resources. At the time of writing, YPGD had no full-time staff members and was being run by a team of volunteers, many of whom had been part of the original team who set the project up in the first place but who are now occupied in other full time roles. Saša Bjelanović is one such volunteer. He describes 2009 as a 'tough year' for YPGD with people leaving and nobody to replace them. The founders of the organisation, some of whom still lived in the city or in the surrounding area, felt it would be a pity to close YPGD after it had successfully delivered many projects and so decided to keep it working (I6, 2009).

This raises an important issue. If YPGD had managed to complete a number of projects successfully, why had they struggled to find a new generation to take over the organisation? The fact that the founders of the NGO had returned to oversee its work suggests a failure to entrench the organisation in the local community and to attract workers, even in an area of high unemployment. However, the work of YPGD continues.



YPGD was designed by its founders as a place where young people could meet others, where they could talk about subjects other than the war – ‘normal things’ – and where they could bring new ideas (I6, 2009). The layout and positioning of the YPGD building is important in this respect. The building is set around a courtyard where football and other games are played, and access is through a set of gates. The courtyard cannot be viewed from the street and is self-contained. A number of smaller rooms are accessed off the courtyard where members can participate in group activities. The building itself is open planned and has an informal atmosphere created by the vibrancy of the activities. It is located on a hilltop around fifteen minutes walk from the centre of the city and thus feels separate to the city. This is helpful for the mission of the NGO which is essentially to be a *different* space for young people.

The NGO is described as a meeting space by Siniša Mitrović, one of the founders of the organisation and a current volunteer, now in his mid-30s. This is especially important in Vukovar because of the segregated school system described in the previous chapter. In YPGD young people of all ethnicities participate in different activities without fear of prejudice. According to Saša Bjelanović, ‘they get things here which they cannot get anywhere else in the city, as the local government are not doing anything for the youth’. Siniša Mitrović is convinced that no other organisation offers young people the same services, saying that ‘for the youth this is unique’. When the members meet each other at YPGD activities there is no conflict, and differences between them, in language for example, are unimportant. There are general rules to which all must abide, such as to keep the building tidy and to not insult others (I6, 2009). By way of an example, during one visit to YPGD it was



pointed out to the author that a group of children playing football were ethnically mixed.

YPGD organise a range of free activities and pursue different strategies in order to engage young people in Vukovar. Activities are run outside the club in different locations such as the island on the Danube opposite the main square. Creative workshops are organised, such as jewellery making. Sports tournaments are arranged and important dates are promoted such as Human Rights Day. As much as possible the work of YPGD is user-led. The role of the club is to facilitate what they choose to do. Siniša is adamant that all the activities of the NGO must come from the members themselves and they must be fully involved. Attention to the members themselves is what drives the activities. 'Of course we have visions', he explains, 'but they are far away. Our focus is on the individual, on individual growth' (I6, 2006).

Siniša also believes that YPGD has a lasting impact on those who participate in YPGD activities and sees himself as an example of this. Young people are the future leaders of society, he says, and great energy needs to be put in to build their capacities. He is trying 'to give them the space in which to develop themselves', and by doing that 'society will change'. There are obvious differences between those who use the clubs and those who do not, he believes. 'You can see those changes,' he says, adding, 'when you meet those people who have used the club you can see the differences in their behaviour, in their communication, in their attitudes and points of view' (I6, 2009).

In summing up the activities of YPGD, Siniša argues that the main purpose of the organisation is to open up the horizons of young people in Vukovar. 'It's easy



to be a Croat, a Serb, a Ruthenian, a Slovakian, but it's hard to be a human' (I6, 2009). He argues that it is this sentiment which animates the work of the NGO.

### *Europe House*

Europe House (EH) was founded in 2000 with Ljiljana Gehrecke as President, who remains in the position today. Originally from Belgrade and in her 70's, she is the only full time member of staff although she employs a part-time worker and is supported by a small number of volunteers. The organisation is based in a large building shared with other civil society organisations, although their work is not concerned with peacebuilding, just a short walk from one of the main streets in the city. An early report from 2001 describes the aims of Europe House in the following way:

**'The residents of Vukovar and its surrounding area are still deeply hurt, disappointed and depressed, and many of them have lost their self-confidence, health and psychological stability due to the war horrors they have been through. They need new hope, and they need leading in the right direction. They need someone to accompany them on their thorny way to regain self-confidence, spiritual peace and prosperity. This new hope is called Europe and European self-awareness. European House Vukovar was founded in 2000 to offer Vukovar citizens and the population of the whole region - regardless of their ethnic affiliation and beyond the close border - a vision of a common and desirable future in Europe. One step at a time, we attempt to resolve real and concrete life issues in order to create basic preconditions to make the vision come true' (Europe House, 1991).**

This explicit attempt to prepare Vukovar for European integration would later give way to a focus on rebuilding the community, Ljiljana explains, as people did not care about Europe when the organization was founded. European integration remains an important goal however, as Ljiljana believes that Vukovar remains a city divided between Serbs and Croats, a divide which must be bridged if Croatia is to join the EU. As with YPDG, EH has several projects running simultaneously, however the



project which takes up most of Ljiljana's time is a four month long healing course for local people suffering from trauma (I1, 2008).

This course has run since EH was founded and usually consists of 10-15 participants. For the first month the group meets twice a week for four hours, and then for the following three months they meet once a week. All participants are also tasked with 'homework'. The course has a three year long waiting list with 105 people waiting to attend, and some have been reduced to tears when told of the long wait ahead. The course is open to anybody who wishes to attend, as Ljiljana explains:

'The only thing that matters in European House are human beings, not nationality. If someone needs help it doesn't matter what their nationality is or even if they are guilty (I1, 2008)'

The course consists of twenty workshops and is broken into four sections, each a month long. In the first month the participants work intensively on their physical health, with the twice weekly workshops lasting four hours long and broken in to four hourly sessions. Normally during this first month the changes which have taken place in the participants start to become apparent: 'Those persons are more tolerant in their communication and it helps', she says, 'and their relations in the family get better. They tell me this.'

The second month is focused on getting people to talk about their destructive feelings (Ljiljana does not use terms such as 'positive' or 'negative', and prefers to talk of 'destructive' and 'constructive' emotions). After the second month the focus turns away from destructive feelings towards constructive feelings such as compassion and love. The final month of the programme is concerned with what Ljiljana calls 'the afterlife' (I2, 2009).



At the end of the course Ljiljana asked each of the participants to fill out a survey to determine how they found the course. In the nine years she has been running the programme, she has only ever received one negative response. The first question is about tolerance – is it increased, conditional or unconditional? The majority of people say that it increased and that it's unconditional, and only a small number of people say it is conditional (I2, 2009). In the last nine years over two hundred people have participated in the course, however, Ljiljana is not entirely happy with the progress made:

'They're not fulfilling my expectations yet. I would like them to get more active in the community. For now around a third of the participants are satisfied in their lives and when they see me walking they give me a hug and tell me that I helped a lot, another third are satisfied and have order in their lives but they are still in the group, and the last third say they don't have time for exercises, so they go to the doctor and take medications' (I2, 2009).

As with YPGD, expectations have not yet been met. The ultimate aim of the programme is to get people to be more active as citizens, to advocate healing and hence prepare the way for European integration, but as yet Ljiljana does not see the changes being made in the city as a whole. For this reason Ljiljana uses EH to engage directly with religious leaders in the city in an attempt to influence congregations:

'We have a religious leaders' group project, all our projects have the goal of reconstructing the community. I started this group 6 years ago. We are trying to effect their sermons in church, and I went to each of those churches to hear what they say and I saw those sermons were not good, as some of those sermons they were talking about vengeance and hate, they always talk about how bad the enemy is, not one word about reconciliation, and each religious group wanted to get their own group, so it was us and them' (I2, 2009).

Since Ljiljana began organising the seminars for religious leaders in 2003 they have met every two or three months to discuss religion in the local community to try to



encourage ecumenical cooperation for the purpose of reconciliation between ethno-religious communities in the city. The results have been encouraging:

‘You can see this in their sermons now, they talk about fellowship and getting together, and the result of those meetings is the concert, we have had 5 now’.

The concert she refers to is an annual event in which all the religious communities in the city – Catholic, Orthodox, Jewish, Evangelical, Muslim, Adventist – congregate to listen to music drawn from each faith, with local people singing and playing their instruments in front of a live audience which is then broadcast on regional television.

In addition to this Ljiljana has also organised a monthly public conference for local people which she sees as the only place where people in Vukovar can come and talk. These events usually feature a prominent speaker such as a national politician or a senior official from the European Union making a presentation about some aspect of Croatian politics, followed by a discussion for which the aim ‘is for Croats and Serbs to discuss their problems without conflict’. The subject of each conference varies, but this goal is consistent:

‘First subject of the conference was how Vukovar can become productive as a community. Most of them were separated, but they all agreed that separation is part of the problem. We take another step with each conference, and on the third conference they all gave examples of good things from the war, like when Croats helped Serbs and when Serbs helped Croats. The last conference was about how the community has developed over the last ten years, and the tensions are very low. With God’s help we will talk about suffering this time’ (I2, 2009).

There are many themes here which are important for the wider aim of the thesis, which is to explore the notion of emancipation as lived experience. These themes will be explored at length in the final chapter.



## *Project Northern Ireland*

Project Northern Ireland (PRONI) is based in a large building fifteen minutes walk from the central square. According to its website PRONI is a 'non-governmental, non-profit organization which gives special attention to youth, respecting differences in ethnic background, religion, culture, gender, race' (PRONI, online resource, 2010).

Irena Mikulic worked with the Centre for Peace, Nonviolence and Human Rights in Osijek as a member of a youth group, which in 1994 began to conduct cultural exchanges, known as International Peace Summer Camps with other youth groups in the region and in Hungary, Slovakia and the Netherlands. Over 250 young people would attend these camps and participate in workshops focused on the arts and peacebuilding. PRONI was born out of these initial activities with the help of groups from Sweden and Northern Ireland, from where the name PRONI derives.

Initially the group met at the peace centre in Osijek as that was the only place doing peacebuilding at the time, and then YPGD became involved also. Eventually there were sixteen people from Osijek and Vukovar who had come together to work on education projects; a good example of the fluidity of civil society organisations. Irena describes these early developments as a 'movement', and by the late 1990s PRONI had grown into a large youth project (I22, 2008). The aim of the organisation is as follows:

PRONI aims at stimulating cooperation and understanding between people. PRONI wants to create and encourage different activities for youth outside official system of education with the aim to decrease risk of youth involvement, through ignorance and lack of alternatives, with drugs, alcohol, delinquency, hopelessness...' (PRONI online resource, 2010).



The work of the organisation is centered around education projects with young people. Irena provides training on the nature of civil society and public administration. As the leader of a training team she trains others in capacity building, human resources, strategic planning, organisational planning, sustainable development and finance. She also holds workshops on prejudice, stereotypes, communication development and peer relations, working in conjunction with schools and teachers. Such training is user led; 'it depends what people need'. For her, education is the starting point of reconciliation.

The growth of the organisation has been in large part due to the financial backing of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who provided support for nine years from the founding of PRONI, and the Swedish International Development Agency, although very little came from the Croatian government – just 8000 Kunas when they needed 300, 000 for the year. In total, PRONI has opened twenty-one youth clubs in Croatia across five counties. Since 2002 the organisation has also contributed towards policy making in the country, a rarity among the NGO community in Vukovar. PRONI also organises a national youth conference each year. One possible explanation for this success at the policy level, as spokespersons for PRONI understand, is that they do not take party political positions.

The focus of the youth clubs is on enhancing quality of life for young people and on 'opening the eyes of local government to accept youngsters'. As with YPGD the activities of PRONI are guided by community needs, and the PRONI board is made up of local people of all ages. In Vukovar, Irena and her colleague Karolina Šoš believe that PRONI is the most recognisable youth organisation in the city, perhaps contradicting the volunteers at YPGD. For them it is the organisational



culture of PRONI which is the key to their success, the fact that they are willing to use their initiative in order to make progress (I22, 208). The account given by Irena and Karolina of PRONI is unusual in that it sounds more like a story of success than of struggle.

#### *Coalition for Work with Psychotrauma and Peace*

Charles Tauber is an American doctor who has lived and worked in Vukovar since 1995. Charles is the Head of Mission for the Coalition for Work with Psychotrauma and Peace (CWWPP). CWWPP has been working in Vukovar since Charles was drawn to the region during the conflict of the early 1990s. Thinking he would be in Vukovar for six weeks when the call for physicians was being answered by a variety of international NGOs, Charles has been living in the city since June 1995. The organisation is based in The Netherlands and has a board consisting of international members, although Charles acts autonomously.

It is important to note this because Booth places great emphasis on the individual not only as the ultimate referent point of security analysis but also as the agent of security itself within the realm of global civil society – the notion of ‘ordinary people living extraordinary lives’. The possibilities for emancipation are in large part with those who refuse to think as national citizens and choose instead to view themselves as cosmopolitan citizens of the world, and who choose to embrace the many possibilities for such activism provided by globalisation (Booth, 2007, pp. 458-61).

There are ways in which it is possible to understand Tauber in terms familiar to Booth, as a global citizen refusing to live according to the rules of the state. An American citizen by birth, and a trained medical doctor and trained trauma



counsellor, he left his home in the Netherlands to come to Vukovar in 1993 when the city was under the control of the Serb dominated Yugoslav National Army. With the help of a number of global civil society networks including faith groups, physicians and academics, he founded the Vukovar CWWPP out of recognition that a huge amount of work would be needed in the field of psychological assistance (I23, 2008).

It is important to note that Tauber would have been subject to some personal risk at this time. Although the war in Vukovar had ended, the war in neighbouring Bosnia was raging and the region as a whole remained highly unstable and unpredictable. Unexploded ordinance and landmines remained within Vukovar itself and in the immediate vicinity. Paramilitaries, who had been involved in the disappearance of foreign aid workers and journalists in the Vukovar region, remained at large. Aware of these dangers, Tauber took the decision to come to the war zone to found an NGO with the aim of helping all those suffering from trauma as a result of the conflict. These seem to be the actions of a man acting as if the lives of those beyond borders are of the same moral relevance as his own, in other words, the actions of a cosmopolitan citizen.

As a doctor Charles had trained as a trauma specialist, and his early work in the city had involved implementing what he terms the 'core course', a programme for dealing with trauma which he been 'trying out' since 1988. In this period he recalls many disputes with other organisations who had been sending volunteers to the area for short periods without adequate preparation for the situations they would encounter, leaving them with secondary traumatisation and unable to assist the people they were supposed to be supporting. Collaborating with the Centre for Peace, Non-violence and Human Rights in Osijek Charles would run up to twenty groups each week, some dedicated to capacity building by training others in dealing



with trauma, and others focused on providing direct assistance to traumatised people. Funding in this early period was drawn from Swiss Church Aid (I22, 2008).

The work of CWWPP remains divided between capacity building through training and providing direct assistance, which Charles refers to as treatment. The office is currently based in a large house a short walk from the city centre and has staff of four, including Charles. Their work is explicitly focused on trauma so as to fulfil a role which should be performed by national government, according to Charles, which is helping people cope with their trauma caused by the war (I2, 2008).

The national government sees trauma as a peripheral issue, he argues, although they pay the problem 'lip service' to keep the veterans content. According to Charles, most treatment for trauma provided by the government in Croatia involves drugs such as benzodiazepine, valium, librium, anti-psycotics and anti-epileptics over longer periods of time than would be usual 'in the West', which for many leads to drug dependency. Trauma is a central problem for society Charles argues, and dealing with it in ways which do not involve the 'weird and wonderful' drug combinations is essential for reconciliation and for dealing with a range of social ills such as unemployment, drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence and suicide. These problems exacerbate the trauma experienced by individuals leading to a cycle between the individual sufferer and the social contexts they inhabit, penetrating different levels of society. In contrast to the dominant usage within the international medical community, Charles does not refer to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) because for him this term is more of a legal signifier than a diagnostic



expression, so in place of this he uses the phrase post-traumatic stress reactions (I1, 2008).

Charles approaches his service users using individual and group therapy, with the emphasis being on broadening individual identity beyond ethnicity so as to overcome the narrow ways in which individual identity is constructed along ethno-religious-nationalist lines. This does not mean rejecting anything, but rather recognising that their cultural contexts has been shaped by powerful forces which emphasise the importance of ethnicity, and that there are other ways in addition to this which can be used to understand oneself. The goal of the therapy provided by Charles and his colleagues at CWWPP is what he terms 'functionality', 'feeling good' and being capable of using one's initiative to overcome depression. A core part of Charles's work is therefore about empowerment, enabling people to take self-treatment seriously through action, whether it be starting up a project for themselves, getting a job, returning to education or even moving away from the area (I24, 2008).

Following treatment Charles evaluates his work by assessing how independent the individuals he has worked with have become, if at all, and to see how well they cope with various life events, an evaluation for which he relies on his training as a doctor and his experience in Vukovar. Success though is an ambiguous concept for Charles, who concedes that perhaps after a decade or more the results might come to fruition, but that it's ultimately impossible to know how successful CWWPP have been in the area due to the methodological problems such a question provides. Asked if there was less trauma in the city after over a decade of his work there, he replied in the negative (I26, 2008).



### *Centre for Peace, Vukovar*

The Centre for Peace, Legal Advice and Psychosocial Assistance was founded in August 1996 with the support of Oxfam, with the vision of

‘a modern democratic society, the rule of law and respect of human rights and values, a society of tolerance and equal opportunities for all its citizens without discrimination and regardless of national/ethnic, religious, cultural, gender, social or other differences’ (Centre for Peace Vukovar, online resource, 2010).

Ljubomir Mikić has worked for the organisation since 1998 and describes the work of the centre as advocating human rights in general but with a special focus on refugees and minority rights. The challenge is set by the Croatian government which

‘remains still one of the main barriers to solving IDP (internally displaced persons) and refugee issues in the region...although many officials say that refugees are no longer a political problem but an economic problem, I disagree’ (I20, 2008).

Studies undertaken by the centre suggest that UN resolutions relating to refugees have not been respected and that the local judicial process causes obstruction to the protection of human rights (Mikić, 2006a; Mikić, 2006b). Research has also been conducted by the centre into access to housing for returning refugees and former tenants, in which the centre argues that the Serbian minority have been discriminated against (Bubalo and Mikić, 2008). That there has been a lack of concern by the Croatian government for the rights of minority returnees has not gone unnoticed by scholars (Harvey, 2006). The centre seeks to provide legal assistance to all those who are interested in their legal services regardless of ethnic background, according to Mikić. However, the focus on minority rights means they mainly work with Serbs who face discrimination (I20, 2008).



Most of the Centre's work has focused on ensuring that citizens are aware of what they are entitled to under the law and helping people to uphold their own rights. This has been central to their work since the NGO was founded. The President of the Management Board explains:

'I would like to emphasise that we started work here during peaceful reintegration so we started helping everyone, those who stayed here and those who wanted to come back. They needed their documents and we helped them. We had various problems. We needed to reintegrate not only properties but also the people and some people worked here so we had to help with jobs and papers, statutes, employment rights. Many people who were born or married in that time. They need to strengthen their status' (I21, 2009).

As well as providing free legal advice the organisation has also played an active role in lobbying the government for changes to the law:

'As a civil initiative we tried to change to affect every change in the law and it's important that we helped to create two new laws. You know Croatia as a country, we are trying to get closer to European law so we were part of creating two new important laws – a law against discrimination and a law for free legal advice. Both laws were starting at the beginning of this year (2009) and we now monitor them' (I21, 2009).

The organisation stresses that they work with all ethnicities, particularly the minority groups in Vukovar such as Serbs, Slovaks, Hungarians and Ruthenians. This is because all these groups have the same problems related to forms of discrimination. Centre for Peace Vukovar conduct their own analysis to ensure that the government is held to account. The NGO wants to see human rights upheld and consider minority rights to be synonymous with this. Educating members of ethnic minority groups about their rights is thus central to their work. The NGO also organises workshops for religious and political leaders in Vukovar to discuss the problems faced by the city. Underpinning all these activities is the notion that the problems discussed in the previous chapter need to be recognised openly:

'We shouldn't take the problem and sweep it under the carpet; we have to talk about it but from different positions. Both sides have their truths and



both truths have to be heard, so both sides have to see that. We have to respect both sides and their problems and the torture that they went through, because they are all citizens of this city' (I21, 2009).

The legal system plays an important role here, it is argued, because the law provides the basis for protection against discrimination. One of the roles of the Centre is to try to rebuild trust in the legal system itself.

The Centre takes a positive approach towards international engagement, and hope that membership of the EU will bring more respect for human rights. 'We have to connect with the wider region, where Bosnia and Serbia borders, and we have to show good will to connect people in those areas', one employee argues. 'It's all connected to the policy of the countries and the behaviour of politicians'. The NGO worker also says they have connections with the Peace Centre in Osijek, the Serbian Democratic Forum and a British NGO – a coalition for the promotion of human rights, as they call it (I21, 2009).

### *Nansen Dialogue Centre*

Based in Osijek, a thirty minute drive north-west from Vukovar, is the office of the Nansen Dialogue Network. The Network extends throughout the countries of the former Yugoslavia and has 'dialogue centres' in ten cities and a training centre in Norway. Financial support comes from the Norwegian government. The aim of each centre is to deal with specific inter-ethnic problems in the local area, and for the Osijek centre this meant dealing with the problems facing Vukovar discussed in the previous chapter. Srdan Antic, a project worker at the centre in his mid-30s, offers insights into the practical work being done by him and his colleagues at the Nansen Dialogue Centre, Osijek.

Srdan is concerned primarily with a school project in Vukovar, with the aim being to overcome the segregated schooling problem by creating an integrated



primary school in the city. As he sees it this would give power to the parents rather than the politicians who would prefer to keep the city divided along ethnic lines. Although in Croatia as a whole there is a high standard of education for ethnic minority groups based upon the European Charter for Minority Rights, he argues, it is different in Vukovar where local politicians maintain the ethnic divide in schools. This might have been logical at first says Srdan, but a decade after the period of 'peaceful reintegration' ended the reconciliation process in the city has reached a point at which mixed schools are a possibility.

Research conducted by the Osijek office show that 78% of parents in Vukovar want to see mixed schools (I10, 2008), although these figures have been rejected by local politicians who believe that parents and teachers prefer the segregated system (I34, 2008). For them, argues Srdan, the priority for schools is to keep them divided and to select teachers based not on merit but on ethnicity; 'they deny this, but this is reality'. Srdan sees part of his task as raising awareness about the benefits mixed schools would bring and that such changes have widespread support among parents. The school project also offers guidance for how sensitive subjects such as history should be taught. 'We should teach and promote the multiethnic history of the city as a value', he says, adding, 'we want to present this reality as reality' (I10, 2008).

Much of Srdan's work has focused on the building of the new school which has involved years of gathering support at local and national levels. One source of local support has been an association of Vukovar parents who back the idea of a shared school, known as the Parents' Club. The Parents' Club and the Nansen Dialogue Centre published a statement of intent regarding the plan for a joint school which offers an insight into its normative justification:



**'Parents' Club advocates and supports a school in which: all children will learn and live together, help each other and grow together, be accepted and satisfied with school, feel secure and will be happy in school. Values that The New School is promoting are: acceptance and respect for others, accepting differences, inclusiveness, solidarity, equal opportunities and non-violence and peaceful coexistence. The New School will be new also because of the relations it fosters, and because of methods and modalities of work. This will be a school that will enable acquiring of knowledge and skills useful and needed for modern life, this will be a school that respects individuality and identity of every pupil, parent and a member of school staff. This will be a school that develops, among its pupils, following characteristics: creativity, competence, critical thinking, teamwork and cooperation, as well as conflict resolution skills'.**

**The statement also highlights the importance of respecting cultural differences:**

**'The New School will not only enable members of minority to realise their right to education in their own language and alphabet and to learn about their cultural heritage, but goes a step further, The New School enables and encourages all pupils to learn about cultural heritage of all ethnic groups that live in Vukovar region so that they get to know each other, understand and respect their differences' (Nansen Dialogue Centre, online resource, 2010).**

**As well as the school project, the Nansen Dialogue Centre has also been heavily involved with the production of a documentary, 'Untold Stories', which sought to show acts of compassion towards 'enemy' combatants and civilians throughout the region during the war. The documentary has been broadcast on Croatian television and at film festivals in the country. The documentary was shown in Vukovar itself and the Nansen Dialogue Centre sent 150 invitations to government officials, but none of them accepted. Few Serbs came to the event, however, war veterans, mothers of the missing and former prisoners of war did come. The film, which attempted to highlight acts of compassion which had been forgotten, did not provoke disapproving responses. In fact the opposite occurred. 'After the movie we gave them an opportunity to write down something', Srdan explains, 'we didn't receive a single negative reply' (I11, 2009).**



### *Centre for Peace, Osijek*

The Centre for Peace, Nonviolence and Human Rights has been based in Osijek since 1992. The Centre says its vision is for 'sustainable peace' and describes its mission as 'building a society based on the culture of peace (Centre for Peace, Osijek, online resource, 2010). The Centre for Peace is one of the largest such organisations in Croatia and undertakes a number of activities in the eastern part of the country. As the thesis is focused on Vukovar, however, this section will concentrate on the programme taking place in Vukovar specifically.

One project running out of Centre for Peace, Osijek is known as 'Touch of Hope'. According to one of the project leaders, Snježana Kovačević, this project aims to 'encourage people to work on their wounds, to rethink their past and to see where they find inner resources to overcome, to improve their health in the context of the holistic approach to health, of each individual'. The project ensures that people of different ethnic backgrounds sit together with the hope that 'working on their personal wounds and overcoming their wounds would actually contribute to the fact that they grow in community with the other, regardless of nationality' (I14, 2008).

Almost all the participants of the project come from Vukovar now, according to another project leader, Nena Arvaj. The Centre for Peace had begun its work in Osijek in the early 1990s as other areas were under the control of the Serb dominated Yugoslav National Army and thus not open to Croats, however, during this period the Centre knew that at some point the areas closed to Croats would once again be open to them and so they began sending active listening teams to Serbian areas to see how people felt and to make contacts. These were followed by the formation of peace teams who would visit the countryside around Osijek, which is how the centre



began work in Vukovar. The peace teams encouraged local participation in conflict resolution programmes and the writing down of stories from the war and its aftermath, some of which were published in short collections such as *Stories from Berek* (Aleksa, date unknown, c. 2006).

The project encourages participants to share so that they learn that everybody is suffering from the war, and because the groups taking part in the project are small this gives the participants the opportunity to trust one another and to find mutual support. According to Nena, they do not pretend that people are not hurt, but rather try to explore how that hurt can be overcome. The participants might see this as impossible at first, and many are afraid of sharing because it might cause fresh pain, but once they see the method working they are encouraged to share their experiences and feelings outside of the group (I15, 2008).

The Touch of Hope Programme lasts four months and consists of a number of weekly workshops and several residential trips at weekends. According to the project leaders, people sign up to the programme when they hear good feedback from previous participants and see the changes that have come about since their participation. People also decide to attend the course when they decide to face their fears about engaging with different ethnicities. These are powerful emotions at play as mothers who have lost sons sit next to veterans from the other side. Snjezana explained that although the participants come from opposing sides they ultimately try to create a sense of a group, of the group being a community in itself where participants can trust and support one another. In April 2009 the Touch of Hope Group consisted of twenty people, although they normally prefer sixteen. The group discuss their feelings together, and Snjezana recalls that occasionally people would stand up and walk out because the discussion was too painful. Listening can be a



problem, despite some workshops being dedicated to listening, as some participants listen not through their ears but through what they have experienced. As Snjezana described,

‘I said to one woman try to listen to what she is saying, not to what you’re hearing from your experiences, because you heard something different to me even though we were listening to the same words’.

The programme tries to impart nonviolent listening skills, again Snjezana explains that the course is about

‘listening to the person who is willing to share with me, where I choose to ask open questions rather than closed. I will allow the other person to explore what she meant, not to predict or to imagine. It really helps communication’ (I16, 2009).

It is essential that the programme directors respect each participant, as the task is not to change their minds, but to

‘support them to start thinking in another way, so it is a change in attitude that we would expect but we would not force them to think in another way if they are not ready’ (I16, 2009).

Snjzena and Nena know when a person is ready simply by asking them questions about what they have learned, whether they want to test their new listening skills, and they make a judgement about when a person is ready by relying on their experience. Sometimes the reaction in the participant is delayed; ‘that’s why they call it a process’.

The process of transformation in the workshop is always different because each group is different, according to Nena. It all depends on when people are ready to speak. In some groups the community feeling comes quickly and they support and encourage each other, whereas in others tensions remain. Sometimes if there is a large number of one ethnic group they are able to agree much more quickly. The process has to be managed by the facilitators who in the first two or three workshops ‘build the group’, as Nena puts it. This involves playing games and exercises



designed to get to know one another. In one early workshop the participants draw a picture of health in sub-groups and discuss their different interpretations of health and of their self-identity. One person shares the picture with the rest of the group, and the emphasis is on sharing objects and opinions. Occasionally someone refuses to listen to another participant. Nena explains that her role in these circumstances is to try and make space for each person, saying it's your turn now, and if there's an open conflict they try to help them hear each other and focus on 'the person as a person'. The importance of building the group is evident here, as participants have to offer support to one another. This is not easy:

'It's difficult, because we work with people who admit that they're wounded, and sometimes they think they have a right to yell, or whatever, it's a process for them to learn and to express their feelings but not to attack others. You always facilitate, always make sure it's positive' (I16, 2009).

There are rules to the workshops, for example, participants have to stay close to the theme of the conversation and not digress to what are seen as peripheral issues, such as the Second World War. Nena explains that they try to focus the discussion of the individuals on the group instead. These rules are group led:

'With every group we need rules because we are going to do this and this and this, and now you can all say what you need, how would you like us to work, and they give suggestions and we write them down, and we always say we can add some more, we can change them, they are flexible, but we have to stick to them' (I16, 2009).

The discussion about the rules begins at the first workshop. At times it is difficult to get people to keep to the rules, but

'if we want to change the rules we can open the discussion about how, what's better? We always respect the whole group, so if we want to respect everyone we all need to share it with the group' (I16, 2009).

The rules are formed according to a group decision, based upon a complete consensus, not a majority view. This is peacebuilding informed and guided by



discourse ethics, suggesting it is premature to argue that it would be foolish to suggest that forms of communicative action have yet to impinge upon world politics. The rules are often about not talking too much, having a right to opt out of the dialogue if necessary, and to not speak on behalf of others. Manuals are often used to help the facilitators. As Nena put it, 'different people need different things' and their role is to understand what they need.

After the programme finishes they organise public lectures where people share with others their positive experiences of the project, and it is not uncommon for participants to speak movingly of their experiences, for example being detained in a Serbian concentration camp, and to induce compassion among the mixed ethnic audience. The strength of the project comes partly from the group dynamic, but also from something more ambiguous; as Nena says

'the group has strength, and we learn from experience. You can teach maths or science but some things with relations you have to have something else' (I16, 2009).

### *The Struggle against Local Government*

One thing that is striking about the interviews conducted with civil society activists in Vukovar is the extent to which many NGO workers refer to their local government as an obstacle to their work. This is consistent with other studies of the relationship between civil society and the state in Croatia which have characterised that relationship in terms of struggle (Koschmieder, 2001). It is important to dwell on this point as it would appear also to confirm Booth's suspicion of government action – states are 'necessary but flawed institutions' he argues (Booth, 2007, p. 205). The point also raises important questions to be covered in the following chapter.



Srdjan Antic of the Nansen Dialogue Centre has strong opinions about local government in Vukovar. For him, the local government which up until May 2009 was dominated by the right wing HDZ, the party of Tudjman, exaggerates the extent to which ethnic conflict characterises the city in public, yet in private the same politicians cooperate fully 'because they have a common interest in keeping power, they need each other'. A secret agreement exists between politicians of different ethnicities he believes. He argues that keeping the city divided is in the interests of local politicians who are able to benefit by playing the ethnic card come election time.

This strategy works in part because people rely too much on politicians to resolve their problems; 'we stepped out of the democratic system because of the war, and people are still not aware of how democracy actually functions. They expect that someone will come and solve their problems'. Such people do not understand NGOs, he argues, and try to stall any form of cooperation; 'they are always trying to avoid it, not saying yes, not saying no'. The local politicians are not driven by ideological commitments, but by the need to take power. According to Srdan one council member belonging to the Social Democratic Party told him that 'ideology is not important because we're all working for the good of the city'. Srdan's response is unambiguous: 'Bullshit!' Since the end of the war, he asserts, politicians have only been interested in one thing:

'There is no honest interest to support reconciliation, there is only the interests of the politicians, not of the ethnic groups who live here. And there is some theory that time heals, fuck it, it's fifteen years after the war'.

Local politicians speak with two tongues about the nature of ethnic conflict in Vukovar, changing their story depending on the audience, he says. The Dutch ambassador to Croatia visited Vukovar but was told there were no problems relating



to ethnic conflict by local politicians, however, the same politicians rely upon continued ethnic tension to fuel their election victories (I10, 2008).

Sinisa Mitrovic of Youth Peace Group Danube describes a story similar to the account given by Srdan Antic. Only since 2006 has YPGD received financial support from the local government, as the administration has been overtly nationalist in the years following the war. YPGD have been seen as a potentially subversive organisation by the local authorities; in one episode the ex-Mayor was targeted with a bomb and the police found reason to question YPGD members to ask if they were involved. They have also been accused of selling drugs and alcohol to young people in the local media.

In 2001 YPGD held meetings with local political parties and the Mayor of Vukovar which resulted in deep disagreements and tension between them, with YPGD members accused of being anti-Croat until one member reminded the politicians that his father had been killed at Ovcar. The problem, according to Sinisa Mitrovic, is that there are very few new politicians coming into power in the city, as many have been in the city hall since the war, clinging to power for its own sake: 'local politicians are local Chiefs' he says, derogatively. The Mayor also said that 'there will be no reconciliation before we find all the victims of the war', directly opposing the purpose and activities of YPGD (I5, 2008).

Sinisa accepts that in the immediate aftermath of the war he can understand why local politicians found it difficult to work with civil society organisations as many had been founded with the intention of protecting minority rights rather than for the direct benefit of Croats, however, with over a decade past since the war ended



he cannot understand why they are so resistant to cooperation with groups such as YPGD. Overall, concrete action with the local administration has been very hard.

Sinisa also supports the claims made by Srdan Antic that local political parties exaggerate ethnic tensions come election time, saying that at elections there are always a few incidents coming directly from the parties, such as graffiti, fights and arguments about mass graves; 'I think they are using this time to get their sheep'. Local politicians stay in power by keeping people divided and playing to the sentiments of veterans, he argues, who number half a million nationally and who constitute a significant proportion of the electorate in Vukovar (I5, 2008).

Efforts have been made by YPGD to form concrete projects with the administration, but as Sinisa says, 'sometimes it feels like I'm calling them all the time...and they need days and days to decide...and of course they do nothing out of their working times'. The politicians do not see local government for citizens but for themselves. He had heard that there were five million kunas available for capacity building but the city hall had no idea how to use it and did not consult civil society groups on how best to use it (I5, 2008). Sinisa Mitrovic and Srdjan Antic therefore have very similar views about local government in Vukovar based on their experiences.

Ljiljana Gehrecke has a similar story to tell about the relations between Europe House and local government in Vukovar. 'We are totally ignored', she says. The Mayor of city did not visit her organisation when initiated in 2000 for eight years. Ljiljana worked on a project with other NGOs in Vukovar known as the 'Open Coalition', which sought to produce a long term plan for the city, something Srdan Antic sees as missing. The group succeeded in producing a document which



they hoped would serve as a 'foundation for a long term vision, that everyone could agree on because everyone wants a better future, and there would be disagreements but it would be a foundation'. The coalition worked on this project for three years and consulted high school students as part of the process. On completion of the plan, they sent the document to the local council; their response – nothing. Ljiljana had hoped that somebody in the city hall would care, but nothing happened. Two years later the council paid for a similar document to be written, but in her opinion, 'it wasn't as good as the one we wrote' (I1, 2008).

In recent months the local government has made more promising noises in their direction, making moves to cooperate. This rarely happens however, and they receive very little support from the local government and their work is rarely featured in local newspapers. The new Mayor, elected in the spring of 2009, even asked her to present her work to the council, although nothing has come of this (I2, 2009). Ljiljana has also faced pressures to conform to nationalist sentiments. One councillor dealing with social activities in the city tried to persuade her that EH should have 'Croatian' in the title, otherwise it would not be seen as an important organisation. The city hall has not been supportive of her overall, she says:

'The city council is the biggest obstacle. They don't want to change their first opinions. When you do bad it is difficult to stop, but if they helped more I wouldn't try as much' (I1, 2008).

Nansen Dialogue Centre, YPGD and Europe House have all had problems with local government as these accounts show. Snjezana from Centre for Peace, Osijek also reported that local government only acknowledge their role when they go directly to the city hall. She believes that they have problems with their work, but 'usually they don't say it outside but they know we know it' (I14, 2008). Her colleague Nena noted that even though the Centre for Peace is well established they are still ignored



by local politicians (I16, 2009). Charles Tauber of CWWPP is also adamant that there has been no will from local government to focus on peacebuilding in the years following the war. Politicians are simply not interested in their work, he says, and are probably against it (I24, 2008).

Of the seven organisations under consideration here, there are two which do not share this story of struggle against local government, Centre for Peace Vukovar and PRONI. A worker from Centre for Peace Vukovar explained that they have not had many problems with the local government; however, the national political situation makes their work difficult (I20, 2008). PRONI are the only organisation to have reported a positive relationship with the local government, although they do concede that previous mayors had not been very supportive towards NGOs. The city hall, whilst not always providing financial support, has given PRONI moral support and has worked with them on some projects. PRONI have been able to contribute towards policy at local and national levels. Asked if PRONI was the exception in this regard in Vukovar, they replied positively, saying that it was their capacity as a nationwide organisation (PRONI has twenty-one youth clubs, four offices and a training centre on the Adriatic coast) which sets them apart (I22, 2008).

The experience of PRONI from the interviews tells a story of success which is not present in the accounts given by other NGOs in Vukovar. For the majority, their experience has been one of being neglected by the local authorities, denied financial backing and moral support for a long time, and seeing their work delegitimised by their democratic representatives.



## *Conclusion*

This chapter has detailed the work of particular NGOs in Vukovar. In conclusion it is important to comment on how their work relates to arguments made by Ken Booth with regards to the connection between (global) civil society and emancipation. It is important to make this connection because Booth places great emphasis on the role of civil society agents as practitioners of emancipation.

Booth argues that 'progressive civil society informed by world security principles represents critical theory's organised political orientation at this period of history' (Booth, 2007, p. 455). World security refers to

'the structures and processes within human society, locally and globally, that work towards the reduction of the threats and risks that determine individual and group lives. The greater the level of security enjoyed, the more individuals and groups (including human society as a whole) can have an existence beyond the instinctual animal struggle merely to survive' (Booth, 2007, p. 4).

Booth also characterises this understanding of security as 'survival-plus', to express the notion that security means not only being alive but also being free from life determining threats and having the space to make choices (Booth, 2007, p. 102). The promotion of security in this way would involve the advocating of aims such as peace, democracy, environmental sustainability and economic justice within the global public sphere, Booth argues, drawing upon Kaldor (Kaldor, 2003; Booth, 2007, p. 456). Transnational organisations and movements can operate in that sphere to further these emancipatory goals, Booth argues, and he takes the trouble to name some of the groups he feels have made contributions to those goals such as Peace Brigades International in Colombia and the Dhammayietra Peace Walk in Cambodia (Booth, 2007, p. 459). Such organisations are full of 'ordinary people living extraordinary lives', he asserts (Booth, 2007, p. 458).



It is reasonable to argue that the organisations discussed in this chapter would have Booth's approval. All of the organisations here make a point of asserting that they stand for 'peace', either in their own self-description - 'Peace Centre', 'Coalition for Peace', 'Youth Peace Group' – or by proclaiming that they are working towards 'peace' in their mission statements. All the NGOs discussed here also have informal or formal transnational links connecting civil society in Vukovar to global civil society as described by Booth and Kaldor. They are all concerned with bringing about a form of security which can be seen through Booth's concept of 'survival-plus'.

All of the organisations discussed here are concerned with the ways in which the legacy of the war in Croatia continues to harm people in Vukovar. NGOs such as Centre for Peace, Osijek, Europe House, Youth Peace Group Danube and PRONI seek to create alternative public spaces in which people can interact and engage in dialogue without fear of discrimination or recrimination. Peace Centre Vukovar seek to hold the government to account and to ensure that cultural and ethnic differences are protected. The Nansen Dialogue Centre seek to promote a new local education system based upon mutual understanding rather than segregation, and the CWWPP attempt to help individuals by providing trauma counselling which is seen as essential for any form of genuine settlement in Vukovar.

These factors raise the spectre of the totalising project, the fusion of sovereignty, territoriality, nationalism and sovereignty. The fact that many of the NGOs discussed here have faced problems with the local government adds a notion of struggle to the analysis. Civil society actors working towards a reconciliation of the unsettled legacy of the war often appear to act in opposition to the state itself represented through the local government. The NGOs discussed in this chapter



advocate norms which would otherwise not be given public voice. As such the NGOs in question can be seen to be opposing the further encroachment of the totalising project upon everyday life, by creating social spaces in which alternative understandings of the war and identity can be expressed. Kotic and Byrne argue that more grassroots organisations are needed for peacebuilding (Kotic and Byrne, 2009, p. 75). This chapter supports that view, whilst also going further by relating such political activity to the broader picture of resistance against the totalising project.

The organisations discussed here then can be seen through Booth's work as practitioners of emancipation, because they all advocate peace and attempt to further the security of local people by encouraging non-discriminatory participation in their respective programmes. To accept this point as it stands, however, would be to only present part of the picture. The following chapter explores a different shade of civil society activity – apparent in the lived experience of NGO work, which is equally important in developing the emancipation as security move through understandings of lived experience.



## **Chapter 7**

### **Conflict and Contradictions: The Politics of NGOs in Vukovar**

#### *Introduction*

The previous chapter detailed the ways in which NGOs pursue apparently similar goals. It also showed that many NGOs have faced similar problems with the local government. The question therefore emerges regarding the extent to which NGOs in Vukovar cooperated in order to further their aims. Each share a commitment to peace and inter-ethnic dialogue, so it would seem only natural for like-minded, under resourced NGOs to collaborate. Yet the picture emerging from the interviews suggests there has not been much cooperation between NGOs in Vukovar.

Indeed, a more complicated situation arises in which NGOs struggle not only against state power embodied in local government, but also against one another, cooperating at times, but in large part ignoring one another and competing for resources and public attention. This chapter will now detail these findings, and in doing so it will raise serious questions for Booth's approach to security studies which places hope in the realm of global civil society.

Even when NGOs express emancipatory sentiments in rhetoric, in practice they seem trapped in the daily business of politics. This chapter therefore focuses on the darker aspects of civil society. It will also show the struggle within NGOs for power, and will raise concerns about how civil society can act as a depository for nationalist feelings and how NGOs can be used as a form of control. This chapter address different dimensions of the politics of the NGOs in Vukovar discussed in the previous chapter. It considers the lack of collective active between NGOs and



possible reasons for this, before exploring the levels of tension between the NGOs concerned. In doing so the chapter is informed by the notion that

‘only by placing our normative contemplations in dialogue with our empirically-informed accounts of the limits of possibility can we arrive at practices that will lead to more inclusive, less violent patterns of communal identification and interaction’ (Price and Reus-Smit, 1998, p. 287).

ESRC guidelines stipulate that ‘harm to research participants must be avoided’ (ESRC, 2010, p. 1). This thesis seeks to follow that principle, and seeks to ensure that the dignity and autonomy of research participants is respected. This chapter uses material from the fieldwork which – if referenced in the manner of previous chapters - could potentially harm some of the interviewees by causing offence and/or damaging workplace relations between interviewees. The chapter therefore proceeds to make use of the material, which is important in understanding the politics between NGOs engaged in peacebuilding in Vukovar, in such a way as to protect the anonymity of the sources when the material risks offending interviewees and/or harming workplace relations.

In the interests of transparency it is also important to reference where interview material is used. On-record interview material which has been deemed by the author to be potentially harmful to other interviewees has for the purposes of this chapter been converted to off-record material, and is referenced as such.

### *Competition between NGOs*

As mentioned above there has been limited cooperation between NGOs engaged in peacebuilding in Vukovar since the war ended, indeed, the failed ‘Open Coalition’ led by Ljiljana Gehrecke seems to be the exception rather than the rule. Srdan Antic argues there is a lot of negative thinking within NGOs in Vukovar and cites Charles Tauber as one NGO worker who tried to get the NGOs in the city to cooperate but failed due to lack of a collective will. NGOs share contacts but not visions he says,



'people are willing to cooperate if it does not jeopardise interests'. He sums up the relationship between NGOs in this way: 'There is a kind of marketplace here, there is competition'. All NGOs are simply trying to stay alive he says, and because they all have to compete against each other sometimes it is illogical to cooperate. The necessity to attract and retain funding infringes upon the ability of civil society actors to consolidate coalitions with similar organisations who share their values (I10, 2010). Although in the past cooperation was seen as something all NGOs should do it did not develop this way. One possible reason for this was that some NGOs lost credibility after allegations of corruption involving NGO employees taking money from their organisations, Tauber argues (I11, 2009). Tauber did not elaborate on this matter but it is clear that he feels that civil society in Vukovar suffered as a result.

Whilst there is competition between NGOs for resources, another reason against cooperation comes from choice. Marijan Persinovic for example said that although it would be good to have had more cooperation with other NGOs for his project Touch of Hope which he worked on, 'I can cooperate best with Christians and people who are ready to involve themselves spiritually in peacebuilding' (I18, 2008). What this suggests is that it would be mistaken to assume that emancipatory aims, which seek to advance dialogic relations between ethnic groups in places such as Vukovar, overcome the particular preferences, even *prejudices*, of individual agents of practices which attempt to further such aims.

Other NGOs appear to have chosen not to work with others because of their moral preferences but because they see themselves as exceptional within the city - Peace Centre Vukovar for example does not have many contacts with other NGOs



nor any joint projects because they see themselves as being the only organisation in Vukovar to be dealing with displaced persons and refugees (I20, 2008).

Another reason for lack of cooperation between NGOs has been the fact that the daily work of developing programmes, implementing them, applying for funding, and reporting to donor's local authorities takes time. The commitments which civil society groups have as part of their work restricts their ability to coordinate with other NGOs; employees at PRONI said they cooperate with some groups but not many because they already have so much to do, and Nena from Centre for Peace Osijek said, 'we cannot do too many things at the same time'. (I22, 2008; I15, 2008). Katarina Kruhonja, one of the founding members of Centre for Peace Osijek, also said that 'you need a lot of energy just to put into practice your own activities'. Other organisations always expect the Centre for Peace, Osijek to take the lead in such collaborative efforts but this takes time, and although Katarina believes that long term cooperation between NGOs should be part of their programme, it simply doesn't happen. Such attempts have been made as peripheral projects, but really they need to be built into the structure of the organisation itself for cooperation to work, and this needs to be reciprocated. Although there was some cooperation with Europe House who hosted the Touch of Hope Project, and also with VIMIO, these were short-term projects with little sustained or significant outcomes (I13, 2009). Nena also says that as people leave organisations the personal connections between them are lost, further inhibiting their ability to coordinate (I15, 2008).

A further reason for lack of cooperation is the need to maintain the reputation of the organisation which might otherwise be compromised by imprudent connections with others. One NGO worker described how their organisation had cooperated with another to provide legal assistance to people in the immediate



aftermath of the war. In subsequent years, however, that organisation acquired a reputation for being pro-Serb because it had been formed during the war when the area was controlled by the Yugoslav National Army. This meant that their cooperation could not be continued, the NGO worker described, because of the risk posed to the reputation of their own organisation which is seen as ethnically-neutral. The same source argued that some NGOs in Vukovar lack the human capacity for significant cooperation between NGOs, especially those reliant upon aging staff members. Furthermore, not all NGOs in Vukovar follow up on promises of future cooperation (Off record, 2008a).

Another source described it is disappointing that there had not been much solidarity between NGOs in Vukovar. He says that attempts at bringing NGOs together which he was involved with were scuppered by self interest and by several scandals involving NGO employees taking money from their employers. The main motive for people working for NGOs he argues has been to make money, not to advocate certain values or policies. Another explanation, offered by the same source, is that NGOs in Vukovar do not fully understand what civil society is because of the authoritarian society they were born into (Off record, 2008b).

The section above has sought to show how although most NGOs working in Vukovar struggle against the same institutions of the totalising project, there have not been significant attempts to cooperate since the end of the war. Lack of time is a key factor, and occasionally NGOs will choose not to work with others because such work would conflict with personal values. Some NGOs might be more self interested, which supports the points made above about NGOs being in competition with one another, and remarks made by NGO workers that they would rather not work with certain organisations in order to protect their own reputations. These are



all serious points for consideration, particularly for theorists such as Booth who conceptualise homogenous understandings of global civil society, for here is an example of a collective action failure on the part of NGOs which is in large part created by choice.

Collective action could have been possible between NGOs in Vukovar, particularly when it is considered that there do exist fluid networks linking most of the organisations. Consider that a senior member of YPGD also works for CWWPP, and that another had worked for Peace Centre Osijek. Ljiljana Gehrecke took part in the Touch of Hope programme organised by Peace Centre Osijek, and some employees at PRONI also worked there. Srdan Antic of the Nansen Dialogue Centre also worked with YPGD previously. This all takes place within the confines of a relatively small city with a small number of NGOs dedicated to peacebuilding and as such personal contacts are easy to make and keep. Yet there has been little cooperation.

### *Gossip, Rumour and Internal Tensions*

Perhaps therefore, there is another level of analysis to which it might be possible to understand why there has been little cooperation among NGOs in Vukovar. The reasons explored above are largely concerned with the lack of organisational capacity and strategy, yet there is another level which might help us understand this collective action failure in Vukovar, the more ambiguous and intangible realm of hearsay where rumour, gossip and intuition dwell. Some employees at the organisations assessed for this chapter were willing to provide information not only about other NGOs and but also *about their own colleagues* which undermines, sometimes seriously, the claims made by the NGOs to be working for peacebuilding.



It has already been shown that the view of at least one NGO worker is that some organisations only work with Serbs, yet this is perhaps unsurprising as the organisation in question has an explicit interest in minority rights, a legitimate concern for peacebuilding. What is perhaps more surprising is that a different source (from the same NGO) has questioned the supposed ethnic neutrality of a different NGO which is not concerned only with minority legal rights, saying, 'I met them and they were strong Serbs, and Serbs with strong accents' (Off record, 2008c). When asked if there were not a mixed group of people using the facilities provided by the NGO in question, a source replied 'that would be pretty new to me', explaining that a colleague had connections with the NGO, who had said that all the leaders had strong Serb names and talked in Serbian. This could be seen as problem for Croats wanting to join the NGO who might be put off by the apparent bias towards Serbs. As one interviewee put it, 'I'm not sure what they are doing now to overcome the ethnic barriers. As far as I know they are strong Serbs' (Off record, 2008d). This is a serious accusation to make against an organisation professing to be ethnically impartial.

However, the situation is complicated by an accusation made by a different interviewee with regards to the source quoted above, in which it is claimed that the NGO worker, again one professing to ethnic neutrality, said in the recent past that 'Serbs have to ask for forgiveness before reconciliation can take place' (Off record, 2009e). The source of this accusation – a fellow civil society activist - has also claimed that a highly respected NGO worker with an international reputation and who has done much work in Vukovar prevented a large amount of money from coming into Vukovar to support NGO work (Off record, 2008f). Whether or not



these rumours are true is unimportant, what matters is that they are believed and serve to undermine trust between NGOs.

Other testimonies provide insights into the working cultures of the organisations under review in this chapter, which further supports the claim that relations within civil society in Vukovar are not always characterised by collaboration. These testimonies are especially important because they come from *within* those organisations. The first comes from a volunteer at an NGO in Vukovar, who when asked what her duties were at the organisation replied,

‘I make coffee, wash dishes...nothing interesting. All the time I’ve been here I’ve only been to one seminar’.

This is an intriguing comment, particular when considering the fact that the work of the NGO in question can be seen as contributing to an emancipatory process in ways described in the previous chapter. The implication is that although in some ways the NGO is pursuing an emancipatory agenda, in other ways the organisation is stifling the emancipatory project by failing to reflect upon its internal resources. The following passage elaborates this point, in which the NGO worker describes her employer as ‘brilliant’ in terms of personal characteristics, but

‘not a good manager...there’s no actual work, it’s all on paper, I know the goals, what kind of society they want to achieve, but nothing is really happening...I can’t insist on my ideas because (they have their) own ideas about health and trauma...they all have their own projects, and they’re not open’.

In the time she has worked at the NGO her duties have been trivial in contrast to the more profound work undertaken by her superiors:

‘I have no options. I don’t have the chance to talk. There was a woman from Srebrenica and for that occasion I was making sandwiches and I wouldn’t say anything. I felt stupid’ (Off record, 2009g).



These are important points for considering the practical work of emancipatory politics because they show how NGOs are also subject to the limitations of any workplace.

Similar issues are raised with regards to a different NGO to a more extreme level. One employee described the director of their own organisation as 'a megalomaniac' (Off record, 2009h). The same source says that the director is a 'dreamer' whose expectations are too high which leads him to blame himself and others for failure. The source also notes that although the director has good intentions,

'He is isolated...with no friends or family which puts him in a very difficult position, but you and I can't help him. He needs to find a friend or a partner. It's his choice, he chose his life, we can't do much' (Off record, 2009i).

One source informed the author that the person in question forces his staff to have therapy with him (Off record, 2009j). A former volunteer with the organisation complained that the director in question has asked for inappropriate and unnecessary medical details before she arrived in the country. Colleagues have noted that he became increasingly ostracised in Vukovar as others came to distrust him and his peacebuilding methods. A respected member of the NGO community in the area described him as 'an embarrassment' (Off record, 2009k).

Thus a different dimension of emancipatory practice comes to the fore, which challenges the notion of civil society being a depositary of emancipatory intentions and collaboration. The methods and individual strategies employed by those who pursue emancipatory goals are contested – even when the ends are broadly agreed upon, there is a form of politics being practised with regards to the means, in which power relations between individuals are present. A focus on security at the



individual level may enable the voices of individuals to come to the fore, but such a method also reveals the tensions within emancipatory practices. Emancipation as a process, as a means, does not embrace some form of endpoint in itself; it may be the case that within the process are multiple contestations ongoing at any time and in any context.

### *The Limits of the Individual*

One interviewee in particular appeared to express the limits of the notion of the individual as security agent, with the strain of years of work in the city beginning to show physically and emotionally. 'In many senses it's a beautiful city', he says, 'in other ways I don't have many friends here. It's very difficult to find someone to have a beer with' (Off record, 2009l). He does not appear to 'switch-off' from work very often, usually working late into the night on a variety of projects for the organisation, and rarely taking days off. As of mid-2009 he had become so overwhelmed with his work that he had stopped using the internet completely, and hence no longer communicates via email. This makes cooperation and communication with others more difficult. His speech is punctuated by violent coughing fits, and he travels abroad for health checks, not trusting the Croatian health service.

This particular employee seems regretful that his work in Vukovar has not resulted in more tangible outcomes. Asked if his work has been a success, he replies, 'I don't know. Technically I say yes, privately I'm not sure. I don't see the city changing much'. He thinks that some of the work done with the individuals may have had an impact, but understanding the impact on the city as a whole is difficult to measure. He is now ready to leave, he says (Off record, 2009m).



Despite of the difficulties he has faced in Vukovar, or perhaps because of them, the individual concerned has a number of plans for the future to expand the work of the organisation in new directions and to new geographic locations. This raises another issue about him specifically, which is that many people in the city – including colleagues - recognise him as being perpetually unrealistic, especially as he has a number of substantial plans for the future (Off record, 2009n).

The likelihood of these projects ever coming to fruition seems unlikely given how the individual in question has struggled with the relatively small scale operation in Vukovar. It is not clear what the interviewee will do in the foreseeable future, but it does seem increasingly likely that he will leave Vukovar soon. ‘I’m ready to leave’, he admits, and readily accepts that he is disillusioned with peacebuilding in Vukovar (Off record, 2009o).

Such an individual provokes serious thought for considerations of the individual as emancipatory agent. Individuals with the desire to help others deal with the legacy of war, to help them with their own specific processes of emancipation, can harm themselves, their colleagues and those they sought to help. One off the record remark from a former colleague was that the individual in question has built up a very strong emotional attachment to Vukovar which explains his longevity. The same source also expressed a worry that he might not be practising his methods correctly, that he might be putting too much pressure on people to talk (Off record, 2009p). These are important matters to consider when arguing in favour of an ever expanding and increasingly active global civil society.

Not only does such an assessment raise the issue of how individuals can talk the language of emancipation without pursuing emancipatory means, it also



highlights the fact that an emancipatory goal such as 'reconciliation' can consume an individual, harming themselves and those they seek to help.

### *Religious Conviction and Emancipation*

During the interviews it became apparent that some of the NGO workers discussed in this thesis have strong religious conviction that informs their work. There is a potential conflict here with the dialogic principles espoused by Linklater. For Linklater, norms are only universally valid if they carry the consent of all those who stand to be affected by them, and morality is continually subject to the outcome of deliberation (Linklater, 1998). There is some evidence to suggest however that NGOs promote religious sentiments which are not always open for debate which raises the issue of the extent to which NGO workers in Vukovar are true to the dialogic principles they advocate. Ljiljana Gehrecke of Europe House is a case in point. Her faith is vital to her work:

'I'm an optimist and I have a clear vision of what will come. There is an analogy between human beings and society. I know that every human being yearns for something more spiritual, but he can't get to that in everyday life because he is occupied with everyday problems, unless something happens which makes us think about spirituality...like a trauma, we try to talk to God. It's the same for the community, situation in Vukovar is still very difficult, and people are in pain, and that suffering is making them find some solution, relief, and I can see that in my workshops. People are coming with big problems, problems with health, and through that work on themselves they see that they can help others with God's help, and their consciousness expands. All the problems in everyday life come from narrow minds, lack of consciousness, and human beings with a big consciousness is closer to God. He doesn't hate. When our consciousness is deeper we get closer to God and we see the big picture, because the community is what the people are like, community is people, community can't be good if people are bad' (I2, 2009).

A committed Christian, her beliefs directly inform her work as a peacebuilder:

'I'm a Christian and I try not to conflict with Christian theology, I quote the bible a lot, I'm not saying that other religions are not right. I say that every belief is good, it's good to respect the greater force and every religion is a



path to that force. I tell atheists that God is really morality, and that man can be moral, the man who is moral is close to God, even if he can't imagine God as we present him. Without morality there is no health' (I2, 2009).

She develops her understanding of morality as follows:

'I base morality on the Bible, you can say that God is love but you can also say that God is morality, and the closer we get to morality the closer we get to God, and the closer we get to God the healthier we are and the stronger we are. As we get stronger we get more self confidence and trust others more, and the closer we get to God we get more whole, and the same if we were further away, we would have more fear and would be more insecure, and the fear causes illness' (I2, 2009).

This directly contradicts Linklater's assertions that morality stems from deliberation.

Gehrecke elaborates upon this point in more detail when asked if atheists are unable to participate in her workshops:

'Atheists don't really exist, they are only people who can't picture God as we do, someone is a moral human being, he is moral because he respects the higher force, people know that there is a higher force by their intuition and they have to respect that higher force, so I quote the Bible a lot, I'm not forcing it on anyone, here's an illustration – I'm trying to wake up in those people that is only one good path. My experience is that a lot of people go to church and pray but they don't live that, they don't have deep faith, but when we reach the end of the course I notice those people who say they're atheists, they have deep respect for that higher force, and I try to teach them the importance of prayer. I can say that everyone's praying, I tell them you can pick one of the names – God, higher force, the maker, universal intelligence, whatever, it's important you respect that, and I'm trying to tell them if it wasn't for that higher force nothing would exist, from the order in the universe to the order at home, without the higher force nothing would function, and more than that they become aware that the higher force works for us when we ask it' (I2, 2009).

The problem is not that Gehrecke is trying to force her beliefs upon others – she is not – but that those beliefs do not seem to be subject to debate. They are apparently *above* debate which contradicts one of the principles of the dialogic community which is that participants must be prepared to question their own truth claims to take part in such a community (Linklater, 1998, p. 92).



A related sentiment comes from Marijan Persinovic, a Seventh Day Adventist pastor who has worked on the Touch of Hope programme in Vukovar. 'I can cooperate best with Christians and people are ready to involve spiritually in peacebuilding', he says (I17, 2008). His workshops frequently involve role-playing Biblical stories, and he notes that 'people who have Christian backgrounds are more ready to participate in this kind of workshop' (I18, 2008).

This raises important questions about the relationship between religion and emancipatory action. The holding of strong religious convictions which are not open to debate may well violate discourse ethics, but at the same time it could be those very convictions which enable the individuals concerned to conduct their work. One conclusion that can be drawn from the previous section is that long term engagement in peacebuilding – a form of emancipatory activity – can take a heavy toll on the individuals concerned. It may well be the case that the holding of absolute conviction in religious teachings provides the moral certainty required for such work.

### *Conclusion*

This chapter has explored some of the ways in which NGOs in Vukovar contradict the behaviour hoped of them by Booth. It has detailed how the realm of civil society functions as a political space in itself rather than as a single agent of progress, and in doing so the chapter has revealed the work of NGOs in Vukovar to be beset by competition, contestation and a general lack of cooperation.

Questions have been raised in the chapter regarding the role of individuals themselves in the emancipatory process. Booth places great emphasis on individuals as referent points and agents of security. When seen in the context of the previous chapter the evidence presented here suggests that emancipatory and non-



emancipatory practices can exist simultaneously. Booth's emphasis on the role of the individual agent of security needs to take this into account because the theory as it stands does not pay sufficient attention to the fact that civil society agents do not always assume roles and strategies which differ from what might be understood as traditional political practice. NGOs and their 'extraordinary' people do not represent an end of politics as Booth implies, merely a different site of politics.

The cases of individual activists presents an example of how the adoption of an emancipatory agenda can damage individuals. Individuals attempting to contribute to an emancipatory process can be left battling against isolation and loneliness in Vukovar. Such experiences are not that of enlightenment through emancipatory action, but a form of suffering in the name of emancipation. It is important to consider these issues because such experiences suggests that if the individual is to be held up as an agent of security, as Booth does, then it is also necessary to see the individual as vulnerable and susceptible to pain.

This is not to say that the idea of the individual as an agent of security should be rejected; indeed, the following chapter returns to the positive role played by individuals. What is important however is to recognise that human frailties do not disappear when an emancipatory cause is taken up. Indeed, emancipatory causes may harm the individuals who subscribe to them. Such a point invokes recent comments made by Linklater in which he acknowledges that emancipatory ideals can also serve to cause harm, a fact that is for Linklater symptomatic of the internal tensions within contemporary societies (Linklater, online resource, 2010).

This is a point best explored through a consideration of the security as emancipation move through lived experiences, which this thesis argues for. The



following chapter introduces the transformative experiences of individuals to argue that despite the contradictions and challenges discussed in this chapter, it is possible to see genuine processes of emancipation at an individual level in Vukovar, processes which are facilitated by the NGOs in question.



## **Chapter 8**

### **Micro-Dialogic Communities and Individual Transformation**

#### *Introduction*

This thesis began with an affirmation of the security as emancipation theoretical move. It ends by returning to that theme in specific empirical contexts by examining what have been termed micro-dialogic communities. The chapter closely examines the descriptions of separate projects run in Vukovar by Europe House and Centre for Peace, Osijek, in light of Linklater's notion of the dialogic community. It does this in order to suggest that these projects closely resemble, at a micro level, a form of political community underpinned by discourse ethics. That argument is then explored further through firsthand testimonies of participation in one of those projects in order to analyse the experience of individual transformation and to understand the radical impact of participation in micro-dialogic communities in light of the restricted local society discussed in chapters 4 and 5 specifically.

The chapter opens with descriptions of the two NGO projects in order to make the case that such projects can be seen to embody dialogic principles. The chapter then introduces the testimony of participants in one of the projects to explore in more depth the nature of individual transformation. It closes by reflecting upon the experience of one individual who was instrumental in the foundation of an NGO working in Vukovar in order to explore the idea of the individual as agent of emancipation. As such this chapter strongly challenges scholars who have argued with regards to post-war Croatia that non-violent conflict resolution offers little in terms of fundamental change, and that such approaches are only useful on a small scale in contexts such as schools and local communities (Stubbs, 1995). The



argument here is that it is precisely through such micro-perspectives that fundamental change in ways that can be understood as emancipatory can be witnessed and understood.

### *Micro-Dialogic Communities in Practice*

Chapter 6 discussed the ways in which NGOs in Vukovar act in accordance with the emancipatory principles offered by Booth and Linklater. Essentially their work involves opening up new spaces for dialogue and advocating on behalf of minority groups and issues which are at risk of being sidelined. Two of the NGOs in question, however, conduct projects which resemble in important ways the idea of the dialogic community outlined in chapter 2. Those are Europe House and Centre for Peace, Osijek. This section will seek to describe the ways in which this is so.

The four month long course run by Ljiljana Gehrecke of Europe House involves workshops on constructive and destructive emotions. An important part of her description of those workshops emerges when she talks about how she deals with participants who feel hatred towards members of different ethnic groups:

When I talk about hatred I say that every hatred is justified, because every hatred has a reason – the only thing is if the reason is justified or made up. I don't want to put guilt on anyone because guilt is a burden. I tell them your hate is justified but what is the reason it is justified' (I2, 2009).

When asked how she gets participants to decide whether or not such a reason is justified she replies:

'We discuss it in a group, and they come to know that every destructive thought is bad for them' (I2, 2009).

This is a significant for considerations of discourse ethics because of this emphasis on deliberation as a means to deciding whether or not exclusionary tendencies are



justified. Gehrecke herself notes that there are many similarities between her course and one of the projects run by the Centre for Peace, Osijek, called Touch of Hope. This section will now explore that project in more depth to draw the links between the idea of the dialogic community and the practices of NGOs in Vukovar.

Interestingly for the purposes of this chapter Snjezana of Centre for Peace, Osijek, describes the project in the following terms:

'It is a process of learning, seeing ourselves as a group – not about loving Serbs or Croat but learning to overcome our own fears, it's about something concrete, a process of learning' (I16, 2009).

The emphasis on learning resonates with Linklater's emphasis on moral-practical learning as noted in the previous section, which stresses the important of questioning traditional authority structures. What is being described in the quotation above is a process which involves learning that one's views of the other ethnic group has been conditioned by ethnic division. She recounts the experience of trying to ensure that participants in the ethnically-mixed workshops actually listen to one another:

'I said to one woman try to listen to what she is saying, not to what you're hearing from your experiences, because you heard something different to me even though we were listening to the same words' (I16, 2009).

It is at this point that the 'hermeneutic moral skills and interpersonal sensibilities' necessary for the formation of dialogic communities described by Linklater become apparent. Snjezana continues to describe the skills she tries to teach the workshop participants:

'Listening skills in nonviolence is about listening to the person who is willing to share with me, where I choose to ask open questions rather than closed. I will allow the other person to explore what she meant, not to predict or to imagine. It really helps communication' (I16, 2009).

One of the principles of dialogic relations is that participants in a dialogue must not be forced to speak. Their participation must be as a result of their own freely made



decision. Importantly therefore, Snjezana explains that as a facilitator she does not put pressure on people to speak. This is in contrast to some of the accusations made against NGO workers in the previous chapter:

'We support them to start thinking in another way, so it is a change in attitude that we would expect but we would not force them to think in another way if they are not ready' (I16, 2009).

They are trying to teach the participants to respect everybody, she adds. They know when the participants are ready to contribute to discussions because the facilitators themselves ask them if they are ready and if they would like to test the listening skills that have been developed in the workshops. This can take time, 'that's why we call it a process', says Snjezana.

Within each group there are individual processes of transformation occurring within these micro-dialogic communities according to another facilitator, Nena Arvoj. Again though the role of the facilitator herself is central to these processes which are essentially long term:

'Each person is different, and each group is different, so it all depends on when people are ready – in some groups they are ready very quickly, encouraging each other, but in the present group there are tensions always, more tense, so it depends on the group. In some groups where there are more Croats, they share the same thoughts and have similar ideas about how Vukovar should change, so it wasn't that difficult, and it was stressful for us. In the first 2 or 3 workshops we try to build the group, through games and exercises so that they hear each other and get to know each others, it doesn't just happen that they come and talk about forgiveness' (I16, 2009).

The issue of personal transformation will be discussed in the next section, but the point to emphasise here is that the group – the political community – has to be built by the facilitators. In order to come to more substantial issues such as forgiveness, issues which are central to individual emancipation in this specific context, the community itself must be formed first and a level of trust built into its structures.

Playing games is important here, as are interactive group activities based around the core themes such as health. Nena explains:

**'They draw a picture of health and realise that they don't all have the same views. We talk about identity, they listen to others, and that's how they form the group and understand themselves in the group. They draw 2 or 3 pictures in a group; one person shares how the group sees health. They have to share things, their opinions, mixed groups' (I16, 2009).**

These kind of exercises take place during the early stages of the course and it is important to note that interaction and deliberation are central here. The community is formed through the exercise of 'empathetic cooperation' and 'the search for mutual comprehension' as put by Linklater. Once these skills have been developed the workshops can address the substantive issues underlying the divisions discussed in previous chapters. The groups within the workshops are formed at random.

Linklater points out that dialogic communities are spaces of conflict as well as consent and cooperation. Disagreements do occur in the workshops, but the facilitators try to make space for each participant and attempt to direct the dialogue so that speakers take turns to address the group. When open conflicts occur in the groups, the facilitators try to ensure that participants hear each other and see each other as people. Sometimes they mediate between the conflicting groups. This can be very challenging for the group leaders, as Nena argues:

**'Yes, it's difficult, because we work with people who admit that they're wounded, and sometimes they think they have a right to yell, or whatever, it's a process for them to learn and to express their feelings but not to attack others' (I16, 2009).**

This process can be difficult for some, she says, and occasionally participants become more agitated as a result of the dialogue. Indeed, at times the facilitators have to stop the discussion from going any further, although they try to maintain a



constructive atmosphere. 'You always facilitate', says Nena, 'Always make sure it's positive' (I16, 2009).

Previous chapters have noted the range of issues which ensure the postwar settlement remains partial. Because of the open nature of the deliberation occurring in these micro-dialogic communities the conversations can be wide-ranging. This presents another challenge for the facilitators. 'We always stick to the topic', Nena says, 'so if they talk about World War Two we say "yes it was a big conflict but now we are talking about you"'.

The facilitators alone do not decide the direction of the debate, however, as the participants themselves construct a framework of rules under which they are all subject. Nena explains this process:

'With every group we say, "we need rules because we are going to do this and this and this, and now you can all say what you need, how would you like us to work?" And they give suggestions and we write them down, and we always say, "we can add some more, we can change them, they are flexible, but we have to stick to them"' (I16, 2009).

This process of rule-making ensures that participants are able to contribute freely to the discussion, as is stipulated by Linklater's notion of dialogic community. The rules are made at the first workshop so as to ensure that the dialogic norms are established from the outset. It can be challenging to ensure that participants keep to the rule, however,

'if we want to change the rules we can open the discussion about how, what's better? We always respect the whole group, so if we want to respect everyone we all need to share it with the group' (I16, 2009).

Changes to the rules, then, are also subject to deliberation. There must be a consensus within the group regarding the formation of the rules and any subsequent changes rather than a majority decisions. This is perhaps one clear way in which the

micro-dialogic communities can operate a more direct form of participation than the larger, institutional bodies which Linklater discusses.

The rules of engagement differ from group to group, but past rules have included not talking for too long and having the right to disengage from the conversation if necessary. The emphasis is completely on trying to ensure that participants speak for themselves and not for others. Some people try to talk about the general situation in Vukovar and the facilitators try to get them just to talk for themselves, and some don't want to talk at all so the facilitators try to encourage them - 'different people need different things' as Nena expresses. You can teach maths or science', she adds, 'but some things with relations you have to have something else' (I16, 2009). She is referring to the expertise of the individual as agent of security and emancipation.

### *Engaging the Other: Individual Transformations I*

So far the argument has been made that NGO projects exist which can be seen as micro-dialogic communities. The emphasis has been with the NGO staff themselves who facilitate such communities. The chapter will now utilise firsthand testimonies of group participants in order to understand the impact of having participated in such projects. This section makes use of firsthand testimonies obtained by a project called 'Touch of Hope' which is run by the Centre for Peace in Osijek in conjunction with a small number of dedicated British based activists who also lead workshops and who contribute to the strategic direction of the project. The testimonies have been collected with the permission of the participants in the project and printed together in a short, home-printed publication called *Stories from Croatia: A Touch of Hope*



(Touch of Hope, 2010). This is the first academic study to make use of the testimonies.

It is important to recall the essential partiality of the post-war settlement in Vukovar. Social division is embedded, as the following testimony describes:

‘After eight years we came back to Vukovar and I decided to never again speak to Serbians. As I came to Vukovar my emotions started to come out and I decided to go and visit my old friend. The response that I received from my friend was shocking. She told me that she doesn't know me and I felt hurt. I told her “You do not know me now, I will not know anyone else who is the same nationality as you” (Touch of Hope, 2010, p. 33).

One testimony uses a similar everyday experience to portray the partial nature of division in the following way. Again, the experience of the individual encounter is used to inform wider meaning about the predicament in which this observer finds himself:

‘My family's tailor Bato lives very near to where we live. Every day we buy bread in the same store and we talk. I asked him why he changed overnight his attitude toward me and my family back then November 18<sup>th</sup> 1991. He only said: “There was that kind of the time...” I forgave him all...

I even met Jovica five months after we returned to Vukovar. He approached me first and said: “You are looking good professor...!” I replied shortly: “I forgive you... but do change your way of life. Do you know where your brother was during the war?” He went away with tears in his eyes, depressed and embarrassed. I barely see him today since he decided to continue his life living in the Republic of Serbia.

His brother as a Serb was a defender of Vukovar and a Croatian soldier.

This is just a piece of the Vukovar's mosaic... this is Vukovar’ (Touch of Hope, 2010, pp. 25-27).

It is within this social context, in which everyday encounters provide any number of possibilities for re-encountering the past as well as the present, that the spaces created by facilitators operate. Vukovar's ‘mosaic’ would not be complete without including the following testimonies.

One passage, entitled 'Steps of Hope', shows the impact of the partial nature of the settlement upon personal relationships:

**'Our interpersonal relationships in Vukovar have been seriously damaged by war. Each had his or her own truth. Even though there should be only one truth, there were two truths among us: our and theirs. Since we live in Croatia Serbian victims are rarely mentioned and Serbs carry collective (responsibility) guilt for everything that happened in the war. I could not agree with it. Negative emotions were intensifying in me every time I listened to that from TV, read in newspapers or when I was told that straight to my face' (Touch of Hope, 2010, p. 5).**

The participant expresses the human impact of confronting what Linklater terms the 'radically different' within the micro-dialogic community:

**'At the very beginning of the first workshop I reacted emotionally and I had conflict with Jadranka from Vukovar, who was one of the participants. She also had her painful memories, and Rosa who would sit next to her lost her husband and son. Ivana's son was killed and she could not even speak about it. Her eyes and spasm on her lips spoke about that.**

**I had lost my father. One shell was only his. Its small parts pierced in his back and his legs. He has bled to death alone in front of the basement doors' (Touch of Hope, 2010, p. 7).**

The participant describes how over the course of the weekly workshops she came to see the perspectives of others. The act of confronting one's own judgments and of engaging the 'other' in a dialogue had an emancipatory effect, releasing the participant from her own fears about her mixed emotions:

**'So we have spoken. I am not afraid about my mixed thoughts and feelings when I can share them with someone. For the first time I shared those feelings with the ones who would have, I believed, killed me in the war without hesitation. But I realised that these people would never kill me. I know they would protect me and save me. They do not carry hatred or revenge. They were doing what they thought was right in that time of chaos, madness and evil' (Touch of Hope, 2010, p. 7).**

By the end of the course the participant came to recognise the shared vulnerability of the people in Vukovar, and that her own sense of loss and fear were mirrored in those she had deemed to be different:



**‘At the last workshop I realised that we are all victims and that as such we can help each other a lot. None of us came here by accident. We all suffer from PTSD. The war left our emotional life ruined and the quality of future depends on dealing with the past’ (Touch of Hope, 2010, p. 9).**

Another testimony illustrates the tension between the structural peace process which enabled people to return to their home city, and the emotional journey which the return home entailed:

**‘On my return to Vukovar I ended up in the hospital again in order to gain strength and to be able organize my life. I was happy that all of us stayed alive through it all and I wanted to start building a new life. But at the same time I felt I didn't belong to that city any more because many people, mothers and wives, lost their loved ones... Though I did not lose anyone close to me, I mourn over people that died and I feel we were united, defending our city, and our country’ (Touch of Hope, 2010, p. 29).**

The participant is here reflecting the ways in which grief and insecurity were politicised by the war and separated along ethnic lines. Despite the return home and the feeling of unity found in members of the same ethnic group, this participant felt the need to take part in the Touch of Hope project. Interestingly, local connections play a role, suggesting that it is to the locality that theorists of emancipation should look rather than always to the global:

**‘One day my youngest daughter suggested to me to come to the workshops where I met Nena, the leader of the group, and we found out I knew her and her parents in time when she was a baby’ (Touch of Hope, 2010, p. 29).**

Speaking of her involvement in the micro-dialogic communities formed by the workshops, it is the experience of difference which makes her participation worthwhile, the experience of encountering the other:

**‘I am glad each time I can come to the workshop and heard a new ways of thinking and attitudes of others’ (Touch of Hope, 2010, p. 29).**

Through her engagement with the other the participant finds that the workshops bring about change in herself. Importantly for the wider considerations of this thesis, the participant recognises that bringing about changes in herself in order to see the

perspective of others – the transformation from identifying with a single cultural-political group to identifying with those formally excluded – can only be a personal change which have to be sanctioned by the individuals concerned:

**‘I am searching for inner peace now. I have found myself again, and am trying to look at life on the brighter side.**

**I have realised that I cannot change others but only myself. I have continued with my life as best as I can, and look on each day as a new day that brings new understandings and through which you can become new person’ (Touch of Hope, 2010, p. 29).**

The emphasis on becoming a ‘new person’ is key here. Booth and Linklater are scholars of political transformation, but their work does not pay sufficient attention to these individual stories of change. Once these stories are considered they raise important questions surrounding the extent to which emancipatory processes are found in wider political changes, such as institutional change, as Linklater suggests, or in individuals becoming ‘global citizens’, as Booth argues. What can be seen in this testimony is an individual emancipatory process embedded in the locality and in specific contexts. It is not to Europe, or to the world, that this person is looking. The participant is looking into herself and at the experiences of those in her local context.

One testimony, this time from a workshop facilitator, provides an insight into the emotional nature of the conflicts and transformations which occur in the micro-dialogic communities. The facilitator first describes the social make-up and parameters of the group, outlined its divided nature which is an outcome of the partial settlement described in previous chapters:

**‘Participants: 8 Serbs (all of them living on the Serbian side of war zone during Serbian occupation, one of them male who even fought against Croats.) All of them speak clear Serbian language. 11 Croats (8 men are war veterans, 5 of them suffering of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, 2 women**



who lost their sons in the war and one who lost her husband in the war)' (Touch of Hope, 2010, p. 37).

The testimony describes an early conflict in the workshop between two individuals from the different ethnic groups:

'During workshops one Serbian lady wanted to talk a lot and would rather talk about general things but less about herself. Three Croatian women who lost their closest ones in war had a hard time listening to her and one of them expressed it clearly in the workshop. After the workshop this Croatian lady said she wouldn't come again because of her personal tragedy and the fact that she would have to hear this Serbian lady. When they met on street in Vukovar, the Serbian lady passed by and pretended they didn't know and see each other' (Touch of Hope, 2010, p. 37).

This particular case shows that scholars such as Chris Brown, who warned that the necessary re-evaluation of one's values within dialogic communities could be painful, have been correct in their assertions (Brown, 2000, p. 208). Over time, however, and within informal spaces created by the workshop programme, the two participants began to engage with one another:

'The Croatian lady, after missing one workshop and after we talked with her and the other two ladies in person (including the Serbian one), decided to return and continue the process with the group. During lunch breaks the two ladies began to interact and talk' (Touch of Hope, 2010, p. 37).

Their engagement with one another culminated in an emotional exchange, testifying to the power of the micro-dialogic communities in overcoming divisions between those who consider themselves to be radically different:

'At the last workshop we distributed to participants somebody else's certificates randomly, in order for them present it to and congratulate each other. The Serbian lady drew (perchance) the certificate of this Croatian lady and had to congratulate her. Staying in the middle of the group, the Serbian lady had tears in her eyes and said to the Croatian: "I want to thank you; first of all, I have learned a lot from you!"... The Croatian lady, deeply touched, said: "Let us continue this by greeting each other in Vukovar and talking to one another.

Most of the group cried....even the men' (Touch of Hope, 2010, p. 37).

This last point indicates the emotional involvement of participants in micro-dialogic communities, and suggests that such engagements are exchanges of feeling as well as understanding. Another testimony provides supporting evidence with regards to this point:

‘We have many scars, sorrow that has stayed with us. We have to continue. Poverty, sorrow for the dear ones we have lost, our town destroyed, all our possessions burned in the fire. It is too painful.

We have to hold our head up and face life. The workshops are a joy for me. I meet new people and receive new understanding. It is easier after all’ (Touch of Hope, 2010, p. 11).

The experience of the child is again invoked to explain the impact of war by another participant, who recalled the terrible choices that people had to make during the war with regards to their identity and political allegiance:

‘My son was a six-year old boy who had to answer this question: “Who are you, Marijo?” to his little friend. Marijo said: “My mother is Serb and my father was Croat. I am French. I love to eat French bread and that makes me French!” (Touch of Hope, 2010, p. 15).

It is the experience of the child through which wider meaning is developed:

‘My son renounced this identity of adults who destroyed 90% of Vukovar. Is a human life worth that little? Is the country more important than a human life? What happens to a human when deciding to replace the laughter of children, tweet of the birds and gurgle of the river with the sound of bullets? Who will return to my son his lost carefree childhood? Would Ivan and Jovan fight again with weapon? I don’t know. I think they would not’ (Touch of Hope, 2010, p. 15).

Even though there is a sense of hope at the end of this passage, what emanates from the words is the overwhelming sense of loss - of loved ones, of youth, of innocence, *of security* – which rather than having passed with the course of time have instead been taken suddenly and unexpectedly from oneself by another in an act of politics, reconfiguring time and meaning from the perspective of the individual subject. The disappearances are taken into the dialogic space created by the workshops. For at



least one participant, the participation in the workshops is an act of resistance to the various forms of division discussed in chapters 4 and 5:

**‘Croats and Serbs live together again in Vukovar. They are segregated in schools, kindergartens and cafés. I do not want this. I go to places where I feel good. I will not agree to that kind of segregated life because of my son and other of Vukovar’s children, and because of the people who gave their lives for the country.**

**I still believe that love is important and that only love conquers hatred’  
(Touch of Hope, 2010, p. 15).**

Even so, and taking into account the hope evident here, the fact that dialogic encounters are part of a process of emancipation cannot be escaped. Participants must continue to deal with forms of insecurity even after their time with the programme has finished:

**‘War brought terrible things. Mostly my relationships with my friends and close family at home are very bad – PTSP, stress and alcohol in combination are not bringing anything good in life...**

**My wish for the future is that my kids have a safe future with job and place to live, a home...**

**I pray to God for health and clear and wise mind that I can help them.**

**A big Thank You for help that you gave me, being aware of it or not - doors for hope are now opened for me and with hearts of unknown people for me that are full of warmth give me the strength to live for tomorrow...’ (Touch of Hope, 2010, p. 35).**

Other sources in this collection continue the optimistic tone. At the end of a residential workshop, participants were asked to create a poem together:

To a bowl of expectations add  
Two spoonfuls of the salt of wisdom  
Five eggs of gentleness  
A handful of love

Five teardrops of mercy  
Two cups of sincerity  
Half a kilo of compassion  
Hundred grams of understanding  
Two hundred grams of joy  
One bottle of trust  
Ten large spoons of friendship  
Mix it together with hope  
Add three hundred tons of smiles  
Two kilos of courage  
A cup of listening  
Bake it in a good atmosphere in good company  
In a room full of singing  
Serve it with a freshly taken picture  
And a willingness to learn  
This will ensure continuous freshness  
And endless laughter  
(Touch of Hope, 2010, p. 39).

What these sources suggest is that the micro-dialogic communities created by the workshop facilitators allow participants to give voice to their emotions and to engage with those they consider to be an 'other'. The engagement appears to result in individual transformations whereby participants come to identify not just with members of their own group, whether they be Croat or Serb, but with members of the other group also. The participants emphasise the ways in which they learn from one another in the workshops, and that they come to see the victimhood of the other as well of themselves.



To a degree this form of solidarity is *created* through the act of participation in dialogue, and authors such as Richard Rorty have written as length on this theme (Rorty, 1989). Linklater's recent work, which has focused on the extent to which universal vulnerabilities can create global compassion and a global harm principle, also echoes this theme (Linklater, 2006; Linklater, 2007; Linklater, 2009). But the form of solidarity discussed above is based upon shared *experiences* of insecurity, as much as being vulnerable to insecurity, and thus the experience of insecurity is central to the creation of compassionate sentimentalities in this context.

In these testimonies participants tackle what has been referred to as 'a known and felt truth that unfortunately obeys the logic of dreams rather than of speech and so seems unreachable...as well as difficult to communicate and interpret' (Culbertson, 1995, p. 169). That difficulty is overcome with the help of individual facilitators, to be discussed in the next section. The purpose of the discussion has been to show how micro-dialogic communities allow people to engage with those they deem to be radically different, and to show how this engagement can result in individual transformation which constitute emancipatory processes. The evidence presented here contributes to previous debates regarding the empirical context of discourse ethics (see Risse, 2000; Deitelhoff and Müller, 2005). The intention has been to present evidence from a specific empirical setting where the discourse ethic is used as a guide to practice, in order to attempt to understand such practices in their own contexts as part of the wider task to understand security and emancipation through lived experiences.

## *The Making of a Facilitator: Individual Transformations II*

The section above has focused on the impact of micro-dialogic communities upon individual transformation within emancipatory processes. This section seeks to provide an insight into individual transformation at a different stage in those processes. By focusing on the testimony of Katarina Kruhonja, one of the founders of the Centre for Peace, Osijek – the NGO which runs the course discussed above – this section explores the individual transformation which led to the foundation of the peace centre through which the micro-dialogic communities discussed above were formed. The purpose of this discussion is to show that the emancipatory processes facilitated by NGOs discussed in this thesis depends largely on the decisions of individuals themselves. Katarina's testimony begins with a reflection upon her pre-war life in Yugoslavia:

'Personally it was a kind of journey which begun in a moment when I realised that war was coming, when the war started. Before the war, during socialism, I was not politically involved, I was not active in any social engagements, because it was not common under socialism. Everything was organised by state. We had some opportunities also, stability, security. I had an internal dialogue with myself, should I become involved in policy or not? I decided no because I liked my own life in my job, my family. I had no energy to make changes'.

The war, however, became a catalyst for action. It is important here to recall chapter 3 which detailed the impact of the war upon Vukovar. It is at that time, when Katarina was living in Osijek, just a short distance from Vukovar, that she became more motivated to resist the onset of war.

'But then I became aware that war is here, I became aware of my responsibility, because of my passive approach to the political and social reality'. I had not given anything for change; I was partly responsible, not guilty but could have done more. We have responsibility for community, for how we live. But I didn't know where to go from here, so I started to protest against the war, But I realised that was not possible. I took part in a mothers action group all over the region. Not just mothers but parents too, asked their sons to be released from army, and I took part in local actions trying to



encourage my colleagues to go into the villages, to go over the barricades to negotiate for peace. I also took part in a large protest on a ship by Dubrovnik, we opened up the channel that people could go out by.

I became aware that each person has a responsibility' (I12, 2009).

In this passage her individual process of transformation becomes apparent. Katarina was driven by the war to resist the oncoming violence. As with the testimonies discussed in the previous section, it was into herself that she looked as she began a personal moral deliberation. It is important here to recall Linklater's emphasis on moral-practical learning. 'At the level of post-conventional morality', he argues, 'subjects stand back from authority structures and group loyalties and ask whether they are complying with principles which have universal validity' (Linklater, 1998, p. 91). As it became ever more clear that war in Croatia was imminent Katerina used her own moral resources to withdraw from the authority structures around her and to identify instead with people:

'It was an obligation to fellow citizens, rather than to my religion or anything else. But it was related to my spiritual life and my faith. In the early days of the war there was so much nationalism - violence from the bombing from the outside, and violence on the inside also - exclusion of others "only Croats should be together", it was something like the logic of the total war, so we started to think there must be another way, they will destroy us or we should preserve our lives to destroy them. What does this mean, I asked myself. My faith became challenged; I was part of a prayer group, trying to understand 'love your enemy'. Then someone said if the enemy was killed it would be for their sake - it would be to prevent evil things. I was so shocked with this statement, like 15<sup>th</sup> century, to preserve your soul we will burn your body. They were justifying killing to prevent them doing evil things' (I12, 2009).

It was in this context that Katarina made the choice to break free of these oppressive structures she felt were being mounted around her:

'This is a war actually. This is how war is operating, I should kill you, I should not hate you, but I should kill you because you will kill me. Such strong emotional pressure to community in war, you can't think with a cool or with an open heart, there is very strong emotional pressure from the situation.

I was very confused. So I sat down. I will not treat my enemy this way. I would like to love my enemy as Jesus would love his enemy, I don't know what this means in practical life, I don't know, but I made a choice with my will, I don't know how, but I would like to love my enemy as Jesus would have. I become free. I felt like a freedom from the pressure of war, of hatred, of killing each other, of logic of war, I felt free of that. I didn't know actually what I should do and how I should behave but I felt like free from the pressure on my mind, my soul, my emotions, and it was amazing, actually' (I12, 2009).

The bonds she had managed to disconnect herself from gave way to new bonds with those around her, a new connection to the local:

'At the same time I felt free I felt alone, because I felt differently from others in my community, but I didn't feel lonely. I didn't feel I had broken the relationships with those around me, friends, colleagues, I very well understood how they felt, I didn't judge or feel like I am better, no, I was free and alone but not lonely, I felt this connection with people' (I12, 2009)

Once she had made this individual choice to detach herself from the structures of division being built around her, structures which would have a deep impact upon Vukovar as this thesis has illustrated, she found a small number of like-minded people with whom she could discuss strategies for dealing with the war informed by her newly formed ethical stance. With others she formed a space free from the authority structures of the war. It was a free space to think, she says, describing it as

'some kind of space where we could talk, feel safe, feel that I am understood and he is understood, how he feels and thinks' (I12, 2009).

The space that they created for themselves would be the space that Katarina and her colleagues would later offer to others through the formation of the Centre for Peace, Osijek. It would later be through the Centre that the individual transformations described in the previous section would be enabled:

'It was very healing for us and I think that this kind of space, space for healing, was actually the space that we offered people. People who joined us thought, ok we feel free to think differently, not that war is something necessary, is good, but also that we can say we would like to look to another way, how it's possible to deal with injustice, poverty, abuse of human rights, differently, than through the violent revolution. So I think this kind of



possibility that you can be different to others in these moments was very healing, and people just came and felt good with us, so that was the beginning actually' (I12, 2009).

In a description of these spaces that mirrors the discussion of micro-dialogic communities in the previous section, Katarina says that

*'this free space is a space without violence'* (I12, 2009).

One final passage testifies to the impact of such individuals. Having founded the Centre for Peace in Osijek, the teams created by Katarina and her colleagues began to reach out to members of local communities throughout the region surrounding Vukovar. They succeeded in helping people to find the courage to reach above the narrow concerns of ethnic rivalry and to create new forms of micro-dialogic community within their own specific, localised context:

*'In spring 2004 The NGO LUC (light) for dialogue and non-violence was founded in my village as result of the records and work of Centre for Peace, since then I am a member of the organisation. Other members are of different nationalities. I was glad to hear that there is a place where we all can sit together and talk about war and victims from the war. I think that every man has his own truth, so let us be human and listen to each other'* (Touch of Hope, 2010, pp. 21-23).

The purpose of this section has been to reflect upon the individual transformation in the early stages of war which would later lead to the formation of micro-dialogic communities in which further transformations could take place.

### *Conclusion*

This thesis argues for considerations of the security as emancipation move which seek to understand it through lived experiences. This chapter has continued a theme raised in chapter 6, that NGOs contribute to processes of emancipation in Vukovar, by showing how specific NGOs succeed in creating what can be termed micro-dialogic communities. Two NGOs show these processes most fully, Europe House

and Centre for Peace, Osijek. It is the latter NGO which has provided this chapter with the most compelling evidence.

The descriptions of programme workshops in which individual subjects can freely participate by the facilitators and by participants themselves suggest that the dialogic principles espoused by Linklater inform such activities. Within the political communities which are formed individuals encounter the other, the radically different. Chapter 3 described the levels of violence in Vukovar. Chapter 4 and 5 showed how the violence continues to impact upon Vukovar in important ways, ensuring the post-war settlement remains partial. This chapter has explored how individuals take part in workshops to improve their everyday existence in such circumstances, to overcome the divisions, contestations and ambiguities which permeate everyday life, to pursue security.

Once individuals become willing participants in the workshops they begin a process of transformation through which they come to widen their boundaries of familiarity and challenge their own truth claims by testing them against the truth claims of others. One conclusion which might be drawn here is that Linklater places too much emphasis on the emancipatory power of institutions and not enough on the power of small-scale, locally entrenched practices.

At one level this conclusion supports Booth's emphasis on the role of civil society and individuals as agents of emancipation and security, particularly the final section which explores the decisions of one individual to stand against powerful waves of violence. However, whereas Booth hopes for people to act as local agents of the global good, what can be seen here are people acting as local agents of the local good. Booth may well be mistaken to expect emancipatory practices to emerge from a notion of citizenship bound to globalisation. It could be the case that



emancipatory practices stem from individual considerations of how to help one's neighbour, rather than how to act in ways which favour the global population.

What is also suggested by this chapter is that seeing the security as emancipation move through lived experiences opens up a range of new questions and possibilities away from the programmatic attempts of Booth and Linklater. By bringing different voices into the debate, scholars can engage in new dialogic relations with those who have experienced insecurity. As with the participants in the micro-dialogic communities discussed above, they may find that encountering the radically different challenges their own conceptions of self, truth and other.

The individual can never be taken out of the dialogic encounter, as these stories attest. Individuals engaging in micro-dialogic communities are just that, individuals, and bring their emotions, unique experiences, tragedies and testimonies to the dialogue. The difficulty of bringing together individuals who have witnessed and felt insecurity on such a scale should not be underestimated, and it is perhaps here that the micro-dialogic community shows the promise of the individual as agent of security, understood in dialogic ways.

Yet to characterise these agents in terms of the global – as world citizens – seems strangely inappropriate. Although cosmopolitan norms of the kind espoused by Linklater are being practised in the passages above, they are played out in specific local contexts and in relation to specific needs, understandings and relationships. The global finds expression here *in the local and through the local*, and as such, considerations of the local are just as important to any conception of global security as considerations of 'the world' or any other universal signifier. The local is where difference meets the universal, where understandings of a possible cosmopolitan global order meet with the experiences of individuals who, while encountering

norms which underpin such discourse, then have to struggle with the ongoing implications of living according to the inclusive principles of discourse ethics in a place where exclusion is embedded in many forms.



## **Conclusion**

This thesis began by discussing the academic discourse of security studies with a specific focus on the Welsh School. It draws to a close by reflecting upon the experiences of those who engage in what are, it has been argued, emancipatory practices in specific, localised contexts. In this way it has tried to bridge the distance between the act of study and that being studied by claiming that the security as emancipation move must be understood through experiences of security and insecurity as they are lived. This conclusion will progress in several stages. It will first summarise the thesis as it has been presented above, before reflecting on specific aspects of the thesis.

The critique of the Welsh School outlined how the security as emancipation move has been orientated towards closure, and was made in three stages. The first argued that greater weight was being placed on the politics of crisis rather than of long process. The second stated that differences with other approaches were being overemphasised in place of compatibility. The third highlighted the absence of voice in the Welsh School. A genuinely open way of exploring the security as emancipation move would be in the context of Andrew Linklater's adaptation of Habermasian discourse ethics, as was elaborated in chapter 2.

In this way the thesis has contributed to debates about emancipation and security that have been developing over the last two decades, and Andrew Linklater and Ken Booth have been at the forefront of such debates, albeit under different banners. It is important not to underestimate the significance of these debates, nor the similarities between Booth and Linklater. It is also important to challenge their positions. Places like Vukovar offer the promise of exploring the notion of

emancipation in ways which reveal the complexity, contingency and unpredictability of practice.

The analysis of Vukovar began in chapter 3 by describing a city on the Danube that was prosperous and relatively peaceful before the outbreak of war in 1991. It then sought to understand the experience of insecurity that befell the city using secondary accounts and primary sources which offered eyewitness testimony. One of the key themes that emerged from these sections of the thesis was that many of those who witnessed the destruction of their city felt they could not describe what they were seeing – the events were rendered indescribable and unspeakable. The analysis of traumatic events in the context of discourse ethics presents an important challenge to scholars such as Linklater who advocate the pursuit of dialogic principles, for the reason that dialogic communities may not automatically be able to accommodate those who, like so many in Vukovar, were left without words.

The chapter also emphasised the importance of place and personal space to individuals who survive the destruction of their home cities. Accounts of security and emancipation need to recognise that for many people the international is experienced through the local, and that when the international takes the local away from individuals the experience often inflicts deep wounds upon them. Traumatic changes to local contexts may well have more impact upon individuals than macro transformations.

One way of understanding the reconstruction process in Vukovar is as a response to the traumatic experiences of destruction. Chapter 4 discussed the rebuilding process using the work of Jenny Edkins and showed how that process reflects an ethnically-particularist understanding of the war, which portrays Croats as



both victors and victims and Serbs as aggressors. As such the way in which the war is being remembered in Vukovar unjustly excludes non-Croats, a conclusion which is highly important given that Croatia is internationally recognised as a functioning European liberal democracy by the UN and EU. This ethnically-particularist memory of the war serves as a powerful enforcer of exclusivist norms.

Such norms are reflected by aspects of social relations in the city, as was discussed in chapter 5. Interviews with a range of actors in Vukovar, including NGO workers, church leaders, local politicians, youth, veterans and other local residents, reveal the extent to which ethnic tensions characterise everyday life and to which the understandings of the war are still subject to contestation. It was made clear that the legacy of war crimes in Vukovar have severely undermined the search for mutual trust between ethnic groups; thus the dead and the searches for the missing are intimately bound with the politics of the everyday.

These two chapters on Vukovar suggest that the international narrative built up around Vukovar since the war, which posits the view that settlement has been achieved in the region, is flawed. Although a form of settlement has materialised which is characterised by non-violence in physical terms, that settlement is only partial. Indeed, there are many reasons to believe that communication in Vukovar is severely restricted by the legacy of the war. Not only are individuals living with traumatic memories of what they witnessed during the conflict, they must also cope with their losses, and with living in the present with those who may well have been enemy combatants and informers, or who are unjustly assumed to have been.

It is within this social and political environment framed by the partial settlement that NGOs in Vukovar act, as chapter 6 discussed. Seven NGOs were

assessed, and the nature of their work analysed in the context of previous chapters. The chapter detailed the range of activities pursued by these organisations, which included projects to monitor legal protection for minorities, youth projects which facilitate interaction between young people who attend segregated schools, campaigns to abolish the divided school system and to build a new, non-segregated school, workshops for dealing with trauma on an individual or group basis, organising seminars to encourage public debate, and documenting extraordinary cases of positive cross-cultural interaction, such as heroic acts in war to help members of a different ethnicity. In these ways the NGOs discussed in chapter 5 can be seen as engaged in a struggle against the totalising project in which they seek to create spaces where alternative understandings of the war and post-war periods can be articulated and played out in practice. The fact that almost all of the NGO workers reported the local government as having been in opposition to their work supports this view.

Yet it would not be accurate to simply characterise this story in terms of a struggle between civil society and the sovereign state, with civil society representing an unproblematic emancipatory ethic. Chapter 7 reveals a different side to the evidence presented in the previous chapter. Competition characterises relationships between NGOs in Vukovar as much as common cause. Collective action has been almost non-existent. Rumour and gossip undermines trust between and within organisations and is intensified by the small size of the city and of the NGO operations there. For some individuals their commitment to an emancipatory cause has damaged their own health and may well be doing damage to others, given the controversial use of certain therapeutic methods. Thus an uglier and more destructive side to emancipatory politics comes to the fore. Scholars such as Booth



who emphasise the positive attributes of global civil society should take such evidence seriously, for it casts a different light on suggestions that NGOs are capable of political actions which are not influenced by competitive politics and human limitations.

Even so, chapter 8 ends the discussion of Vukovar on a hopeful note, by emphasising two key projects in Vukovar which can be seen as facilitating what have been termed in this thesis as micro-dialogic communities. In such contexts individuals are able to encounter members of a different ethnicity in a space created by dedicated facilitators but shaped by rules of engagement agreed upon by every participant. They are then able to articulate their often competing claims to truth about the war, and to relay their experiences of war to the group. As the testimonies discussed in chapter 8 suggest, these processes do not always result in individuals changing their own assumptions about the war and its aftermath, but such changes do occur for many participants.

The transformations that engagement in a micro-dialogic community of this nature can produce, particularly in the context of the partial settlement discussed previously, suggest the adoption of the discourse ethic by specialist facilitators as a reaction to war can have serious and positive implications for individuals living with the legacy of violence. The final section in the chapter attempted to take a step back from the transformative experience of engaging in a micro-dialogic community to understand the facilitator as emancipatory agent. It suggests that the steps that lead an individual to facilitate dialogic encounters are intensely personal and come 'from within'.

In the case discussed in the thesis, it was the experience of being thrust into war by the international that led to changes in self-perception, from a position of passive citizenship to active citizenship, which in turn led to a commitment to anti-war activism and ultimately to the formation of micro-dialogic communities. First came the reaction of the self, then a conscious decision to act, and finally collective action to organise and to facilitate the initiation of micro-dialogic communities that could help others develop their own reactions to the violence. The thesis thus ends with an example of individual action against insecurity, which empowered others to engage in dialogic processes in pursuit of security.

This thesis has argued that understandings of security and emancipation must be seen through lived experiences. In doing so the discourse ethic can be seen to play out in specific contexts, and as such the inherent specificity of the locality, and therefore of emancipatory practices, becomes apparent. Furthermore, the micro-dialogic community has emerged as a practical reality which suggests that attempts to understand emancipatory practices in terms of wider institutional developments might be missing a vital characteristic of contemporary political developments, particularly in post-war environments.

### *Vukovar*

The opening section to this conclusion has summarised the arguments made in the preceding chapters. The empirical focus of those chapters has been Vukovar, and it is important to offer some closing thoughts about the city that has presented this thesis with material that is rich in political meaning, tragic in its bare portrait of suffering, but not without stories of hope and compassion.



At the time of writing, over nineteen years have passed since war broke out in eastern Croatia. The war will continue to be remembered as the memorials portray it; a war for Croatian independence, fought by Croatian patriots, caused by Serbian aggression. That understanding of the war will continue to dominate social relations in Vukovar more generally, and the result will be that understandings of the war that seek to show the flaws of ethnically-particularist understandings will continue to be marginalised. Vukovar will continue to be seen as a symbol of the Homeland War, and annual memorial services for the Croatian dead will continue to be held there. Such structures do not easily melt away so soon after war.

The NGOs discussed in this thesis are therefore a vital resource for creating spaces in which alternative understandings of the war and its impact can be developed, and for helping people cope with the lasting effect of trauma and bereavement. Yet for those sympathetic to their cause there must be concern for the future. Funding is a perpetual concern for all the projects discussed in this thesis. At least one NGO is facing the prospect of having their funding cut because they can no longer convince their longstanding donor that Vukovar is in need of reconciliation work. All face uncertainty as a consequence of the global economic downturn.

Perhaps an even more pressing problem, however, concerns the individuals involved in the projects. It has been noted that some are frail and elderly, and may not be able to continue working in Vukovar much longer. For NGOs that do not have in place surefooted plans for the future, as is the case for several of the organisations in question here, this is very destabilising. All must face the ongoing struggle to attract new participants to their work in order to justify their existence as NGOs to donors, which given the powerful structural forces against any projects

orientated towards reconciliation is no easy task. Funding for such projects will inevitably decline as resources are directed towards new areas in conflict.

One recent political development in Vukovar may be important for the causes advanced by the NGOs discussed here. A new mayor was elected in the city in the spring of 2009, ousting the nationalist HDZ party and ushering into local power the social democrats, a result that preceded the party's victory in the presidential elections of 2010. The new mayor, a veteran who is critical of dominant understandings of the war, has been supportive of NGO activity in the city, and appointed an influential former NGO worker to organise local events for the whole community (I9, 2009).

The significance of this should not be underestimated, give the fact that local government has for years been a source of opposition to civil society in Vukovar. The moral support of the mayor for peace projects is important because it means the instruments of the state – engaged as it has been in the totalising project – are now being slowly turned towards more emancipatory possibilities. More research will be required during the next few years to ascertain the extent to which the election of social democratic parties changes dominant perceptions of the war and associated exclusionary practices, if at all.

Taken as a whole, civil society activity geared towards reconciliation in Vukovar has been declining over the last decade, and that pattern may continue in the future. This may well be a pattern replicated around the world in post-war regions. What this means for scholars interested in the relationship between security, emancipation and civil society is that the kind of empirical fieldwork undertaken in this thesis can only be done during limited time periods. For small NGOs such as



those studied in this thesis, once the individuals involved withdraw from their work, there is a strong chance of the organisation withdrawing from the field also. This makes the role of the academic in recording their work and testimonies crucial for the wider project of furthering the security as emancipation move.

### *Security and Silence*

As this thesis draws to an end, and leaving Vukovar behind also, one closing reflection concerns an element of the fieldwork that had a particularly powerful impact upon the author: those who are looking for the missing. The violence of the past is not wrapped up with time's passing, although it might seem that way in those dry documents written in the language of the law and with the lawyer's eye for the finite, the closed, the exact, the violence of the past continues to burn and to scold those who were within its reach. To not understand that is to continue the violence in another form, a 'non-violent' violence that appears passive and is often accepted as such, but which by accepting the closure expressed in law and mirrored in memorials merely continues the journey of the bullet which had apparently found its target.

Perhaps it is from those aging men and women who are still looking for the bodies of their sons and husbands that scholars who study security have most to learn about their own subject. The missing lay only to be found, each telling a story both unique and identical, and those who look for them speak to strangers about their post-war lives in the hope that the act of speaking brings their loved ones closer, that looking and speaking will offer a form of closure for them.

The missing remain so, disappeared, and that unimaginable fate, the terrible silence of solitude, the being beneath the earth but unmarked, the vast chasm

between that end and the beginning that was nurtured, loved, cared for in the warmth of the embrace that came from life and through it, is unknowable, unspeakable. Words may always fail. The voices of those who remain are but traces of the dead, but included they must be in deliberations about security and emancipation if ongoing forms of insecurity are to be understood and reconciled.

### *Emancipatory research and ethics*

In conclusion some remarks must also be made about the nature of the research conducted in this thesis. The argument throughout has been that security and emancipation must be understood through lived experiences. This requires scholars to engage with concrete, often localised circumstances, as was the case in this study.

Emancipatory practices which embody the discourse ethic do seem to be occurring in the present in local, specific contexts such as Vukovar. Understanding how such communities operate in practice, in different contexts, is one way forward for the security as emancipation move. Yet understanding has limits. It may well be that all scholars can do is to say that instead of promising to always defend those who suffer at the hands of world politics, they should make an attempt to understand their experiences whilst fully acknowledging that *they will never truly understand* because they were not there.

It is essential that such an attempt is made so that experiences of insecurity can continue to be studied as closely as possible. The final chapter showed how individuals make their own choices to defy dominant narratives and how NGOs create spaces for dialogue between different groups. It seems that for some individuals, a movement away from insecurity towards greater security has been achieved through their participation in certain NGO programmes. This is a highly



significant point, because it shows how individuals, within their specific contexts, contribute to processes of emancipation. Any account of macro-transformation must consider the politics of the micro also, including the contradictions with theory therein, so that the complexity, nuances, and dilemmas involved in emancipatory practices can be understood. This requires sensitivity on the part of the researcher.

When the international is seen in the local, as this thesis has sought to achieve all the way through the analysis, a quality is introduced to academic studies which the scholar alone would normally not be able to access. The feeling and form that comes from including the voices in this study have infused the discussions of security as emancipation with real-life scenarios of security and insecurity. What emerges from the approach which has attempted to grasp security and emancipation as lived experiences is the complexity and ambiguity of practice, and the researcher is part of this also.

The nature of the research conducted in this thesis does therefore raise the issue of research ethics. Chapter 7 demonstrated that interview subjects can turn on one another if they know they are making comments off the record. Yet in a city such as Vukovar anonymity counts for little when the NGO community is so small. This is a problem that scholars sympathetic to the approach outlined here need to be sensitive to. Getting closer to those who live security and emancipation as everyday experiences requires greater awareness of one's power and responsibility as a researcher.

### *Beyond the Welsh School*

Ken Booth's move to associate security with emancipation opened up a number of possibilities within the subdiscipline of security studies, and many such possibilities

remain. It has been argued in this thesis, which has been written in the spirit of the seminal article *Security and Emancipation* (Booth, 1991a), that the development of the Welsh School has resulted in a number of those possibilities being closed down. The resulting discussion opens the question of the extent to which there is now a need for, instead of remoulding the Welsh School, a move beyond it.

What is not in contention here though is the importance of the concept of emancipation to any further developments. Emancipation is an idea with a long history yet which continues to inspire political debate and action. Debates about its meaning and scope have been highlighted in this thesis, and will undoubtedly continue long into the future. All academic work is informed by theory of one kind or another and all theory, of course, has a purpose (Cox, 1981). Emancipation understood as non-repressive dialogue is a robust normative position, but it is also one that guides an approach to fieldwork informed by empathy. There is much more work to be done to explore the relationship between emancipation and security, and the kind of fieldwork undertaken in this thesis provides one way of taking that exploration further. Emancipation as a concept should continue to inform debates about security. A distinguished line of thinkers have been animated by the idea of emancipation, and their work is a vital resource in any attempt to think through the implications of associating security and emancipation.

At all times though, as Booth argues, it must be remembered that theories about emancipation will always remain incomplete if they do not engage with actual experiences of security and insecurity. The crucial issue is the nature of that engagement. Continual emphasis on the positive role of global civil society may not always make for accurate accounts of capacity, nor might they always take into consideration the limitations of such political actors. Greater efforts should be made



to listen to those who are trying to follow emancipatory principles, no matter how small a scale this could be. The approach undertaken in this thesis has been to use theory as a means of identifying sites where emancipatory practices might be evident and to then explore them in their own contexts.

In light of what has been said in this thesis it is perhaps more productive to conduct research in the spirit of the security as emancipation move rather than to be overly concerned with the construction of a school of thought, whether it be termed the Welsh School or Critical Security Studies. This is not to be anti-academic; indeed, academia is an ideal site for reflection on these matters. Rather, what is being argued for is an approach to studying security informed by the idea of emancipation and which is more open to the multitude of experiences through which security and insecurity are played out.

One implication of adopting a more open-ended approach to the security as emancipation move, as this thesis has attempted to do, is that the notion of whether or not there should exist a Welsh School is called into question. An emancipatory approach to security can play a vital role in formulating new ways of thinking and practicing security, as was Booth's intention in his groundbreaking security as emancipation move. But asserting a universal programme for emancipation, as is the tendency of the Welsh School, is not the way forward because such an approach risks reifying exclusionary academic practices.

The empirical chapters suggest that the experiences of those who have seen true insecurity are too great to be subsumed within a school of thought. Perhaps a more modest approach is required, one which diligently records their experiences of insecurity and their attempts to establish security rather than treating individuals as

objects of research. A further task would be to treat their experiences with more respect than has been the case previously. The idea that scholars can somehow identify with those who have lived through true insecurity – as those in Vukovar have – and stand with them in common cause, seems misplaced. Is it not fairer to the individuals themselves to simply allow their stories to stand, rather than to play academic games with those who have already lost so much in the violence of world politics?

There is much to learn from these experiences of insecurity, and scholars sympathetic to the security as emancipation move should attempt forms of engagement that promote such learning. Furthermore, as the final chapter suggests, there are potentially infinite numbers of ways in which individuals seek to create new forms of security for themselves and for their communities. The politics of security as emancipation may well be ongoing in multiple forms and sites throughout the world. It may be impossible to know them all in their entirety. But by harnessing the discourse ethic, the limits and possibilities of emancipation might be grasped, and with such attempts understandings of security as emancipation might engage more fully with feeling and form, with actual experiences of security and insecurity as they are lived.

#### *Further research*

The final section of this thesis points towards the possibilities for further research. Follow up studies in Vukovar is an obvious place to start; as was noted above, the impact of social democratic local and national governments upon dominant understandings of the war and related exclusionary practices must be closely observed. Another line of inquiry might pursue those who took part on the



workshops discussed in the final chapter to see if they have subsequently engaged in any other forms of civil society activity informed by emancipatory principles.

The scope of the approach suggested here though, to understand security and emancipation through lived experiences, goes far beyond the specific context of Vukovar. Studies that use the theoretical material developed by Booth, Linklater and others to identify potential emancipatory practices in other localities and to see how they play out in their specific contexts would be welcome. Research into similar contexts as that analysed in this thesis would provide interesting comparative material for understanding the relationship between war and dialogic practices. Yet it would also be useful to have studies probing security and emancipation as lived experiences in contexts unrelated to war, and instead focused on other forms of insecurity related to, for example, domestic violence, gang conflict and mass immigration, in order to see how dialogic practices play out in other sites of insecurity.

It may well be the case that when more attempts to understand emancipation and security through lived experiences are made, there will be greater recognition of everyday discourse ethics, and with that, the possibility of an emancipated future might be made more likely. This thesis began by reflecting on the intellectual openness and creativity that inspired the new approaches to the study of security. It closes with a hope that more spaces of nonviolence will emerge over time, that individuals will continue to rise up against unjust forms of exclusion, and that dialogue between the radically different will lead to politics being driven by the desire for peace and understanding.

## **Appendix**

### ***List of Interviews***

Numbers denote separate transcript. Multiple interviewees were recorded on some occasions.

Name, place of interview, date, selected institutional affiliations.

1. Ljiljana Gehrecke, Vukovar, Summer, 2008 (Europe House Vukovar).
2. Ljiljana Gehrecke, Vukovar, Spring, 2009 (Europe House Vukovar).
3. Ljiljana Gehrecke, Vukovar, Autumn, 2009 (Europe House Vukovar).
4. Stanislava Malić-Gostović, Vukovar, Spring, 2009 (Europe House Vukovar).
5. Siniša Mitrović, Vukovar, Summer, 2008 (Youth Peace Group Danube).  
Ivana Malve, Vukovar, Summer, 2008 (Youth Peace Group Danube).
6. Nebojša Ugliš, Vukovar, Autumn, 2009 (Youth Peace Group Danube).  
Sinisa Stanivuk, Vukovar, Autumn, 2009 (Youth Peace Group Danube/Coalition for Work With Psychotrauma and Peace).  
Saša Bjelanović, Vukovar, Autumn, 2009 (Youth Peace Group Danube).
7. Sinisa Stanivuk, Vukovar, Autumn, 2009 (Youth Peace Group Danube/Coalition for Work With Psychotrauma and Peace).
8. Sinisa Stanivuk, Vukovar, Autumn, 2009 (Youth Peace Group Danube/Coalition for Work With Psychotrauma and Peace).
9. Siniša Mitrović, Vukovar, Summer, 2008 (Vukovar City Hall).  
Ivana Malve, Vukovar, Summer, 2008.
10. Srdjan Antić, Vukovar, Summer, 2008 (Nansen Dialogue Centre Osijek).
11. Srdjan Antić, Osijek, Autumn, 2009 (Nansen Dialogue Centre Osijek).
12. Katarina Kruhonja, Osijek, Autumn, 2009 (Centre for Peace Osijek).



13. Katarina Kruhonja, Osijek, Autumn, 2009 (Centre for Peace Osijek).
14. Snježana Kovačević, Osijek, Summer, 2008 (Centre for Peace Osijek).
15. Nena Arvaj, Osijek, Summer, 2008 (Centre for Peace Osijek).
16. Snježana Kovačević, Osijek, Spring, 2009 (Centre for Peace Osijek).  
Nena Arvaj, Osijek, Spring, 2009 (Centre for Peace Osijek).
17. Marijan Peršinović, Vukovar, Summer, 2008 (Centre for Peace Osijek/Seventh Day Adventist Church).
18. Marijan Peršinović, Vukovar, Summer, 2008 (Centre for Peace Osijek/Seventh Day Adventist Church).
19. Marijan Peršinović, Vukovar, Summer, 2008 (Centre for Peace Osijek/Seventh Day Adventist Church).
20. Ljubomir Mikić, Vukovar, Summer, 2008 (Peace Centre Vukovar).
21. Milena Jurišić, Vukovar, Autumn, 2009 (Peace Centre Vukovar).
22. Irena Mikulić, Vukovar, Summer, 2008 (Project Northern Ireland [PRONI]).  
Karolina Šoš, Vukovar, Summer, 2008 (Project Northern Ireland [PRONI]).
23. Charles Tauber, Vukovar, Summer, 2008 (Coalition for Work With Psychotrauma and Peace).
24. Charles Tauber, Vukovar, Summer, 2008 (Coalition for Work With Psychotrauma and Peace).
25. Charles Tauber, Vukovar, Summer, 2008 (Coalition for Work With Psychotrauma and Peace).
26. Charles Tauber, Vukovar, Summer, 2008 (Coalition for Work With Psychotrauma and Peace).
27. Charles Tauber, Vukovar, Summer, 2008 (Coalition for Work With Psychotrauma and Peace).

28. Charles Tauber, Vukovar, Summer, 2008 (Coalition for Work With Psychotrauma and Peace).
29. Charles Tauber, Vukovar, Summer, 2008 (Coalition for Work With Psychotrauma and Peace).
30. Charles Tauber, Vukovar, Summer, 2008 (Coalition for Work With Psychotrauma and Peace).
31. Charles Tauber, Vukovar, Spring, 2009 (Coalition for Work With Psychotrauma and Peace).
32. Sabo Željko, Vukovar, Spring, 2009 (Social Democratic Party, Vukovar).
33. Sabo Željko, Vukovar, Autumn, 2009 (Social Democratic Party/Mayor of Vukovar).
34. Vladimir Emedi, Vukovar, Summer, 2008 (Croatian Democratic Union [HDZ], Vukovar).
35. Vojislav Stanimirović, Vukovar, Summer, 2008 (Independent Democratic Serbian Party [SDSS], Vukovar).
36. Zlatko Špehar, Vukovar, Summer, 2008 (The Franciscan Monastery and the Church of St. Philip and Jacob, Vukovar).
37. Jovan Radivojević, Vukovar, Summer, 2008 (Church of St. Nicholas, Vukovar).
38. Laszlo Nemeth, Vukovar, Summer, 2008 (Agape Evangelical Church, Vukovar-Borovo-Naselje).
39. Mato Dudić, Vukovar, Spring, 2009 (Vukovar Retired Policeman's Association).
40. Vesna Bosanac, Vukovar, Summer, 2008 (Vukovar Hospital).
41. Sanja Vukičević, Vukovar, Summer, 2008.
42. Manda Potko, Vukovar, Summer, 2008 (Mothers of Vukovar).
- Mirko Kovačić, Vukovar, Summer, 2008 (Mothers of Vukovar).



43. Mirko Kovačić, Vukovar, Spring, 2009 (Mothers of Vukovar).

44. Manda Potko, Vukovar, Autumn, 2009 (Mothers of Vukovar).

45. Vesna Katić, Vukovar, Autumn, 2009 (Widows of Vukovar).

46. Sandra Maul, Vukovar, Autumn, 2009 (Vukovar Library).

47. Jasna Babic, Vukovar, Spring, 2009 (Vukovar Tourist Board).

Maja Katinić, Vukovar, Spring, 2009 (Vukovar Tourist Board).

48. Andrej Edelinski, Vukovar, Autumn, 2009.

49. Nebojša Dobrijević, Vukovar, Summer, 2008.

50. Dragica Aleksa, Berak, Summer, 2008 (Light for Dialogue [LUC]).

51. Mihaela Kutz, Vukovar, Summer, 2008.

Ljiljana Banović, Vukovat, Summer, 2008.

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